

- A patient gives their provider or plan permission to share their information.
- A patient is present and does not object to sharing the information.
- A patient is not present, and the provider determines based on professional judgment that it's in their best interest.
  - Examples:
    - An emergency room doctor may discuss their treatment in front of their friend when the patient asks the friend to come into the treatment room.
    - The hospital may discuss a patient's bill with a patient's daughter who is with them and has a question about the charges, if you do not object.
    - A doctor may discuss the drugs a patient needs to take with their health aide who has come with them to their appointment.
    - A nurse may not discuss a patient's condition with their brother if they tell her not to.
    - HIPAA also allows healthcare providers to give prescription drugs, medical supplies, x-rays, and other healthcare items to a family member, friend, or other person a patient sends to pick them up.

A healthcare provider or health plan may also share relevant information if a patient is not around or cannot give permission when a healthcare provider or plan representative believes, based on professional judgment, that sharing the information is in the patient's best interest.

- Examples:
  - A patient had emergency surgery and is still unconscious. The surgeon may tell the patient's spouse about their condition, either in person or by phone, while they are unconscious.
  - A doctor may discuss a patient's drugs with their caregiver who calls their doctor with a question about the right dosage.
  - A doctor may not tell a patient's friend about a past medical problem that is unrelated to their current condition.

## CONSENT IN HEALTHCARE AND RESEARCH

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### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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One of the earliest ethics codes was the **Nuremberg Code**—a set of 10 principles written in 1947 in conjunction with the trials of Nazi physicians accused of shockingly cruel research on concentration camp prisoners during World War II. It provided a standard against which to compare the behavior of the individuals on trial—many of whom were eventually convicted and either imprisoned or sentenced to death. The Nuremberg Code was particularly clear about the importance of carefully weighing risks against benefits and the need for informed consent.

The **Declaration of Helsinki** is a similar ethics code that was created by the World Medical Council in 1964. Among the standards that it added to the Nuremberg Code was that research with human participants should be based on a written protocol—a detailed description of the research—that is reviewed by an independent committee. The Declaration of Helsinki has been revised several times, most recently in 2013.



*Image 5.3. Ethical codes guide healthcare professionals on how to ethically conduct human research. [\[Image description\]](#).*

In the United States, concerns about the Tuskegee study and others led to the publication in 1978 of a set of federal guidelines called the **Belmont Report**. The Belmont Report explicitly recognized the principle of seeking justice, including the importance of conducting research in a way that distributes risks and benefits fairly across different groups at the societal level. The Belmont Report was influential in the formation of national ethical guidelines for research in both the US and Canada.

### INFORMED CONSENT

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**Informed consent** means obtaining and documenting people's agreement to have a medical procedure or participate in a study, having informed them of everything that might reasonably be expected to affect their decision. Properly informing participants includes details of the procedure, the risks and benefits of the research, the fact that they have the right to decline to participate or to withdraw from the study, the consequences of doing so, and any legal limits to confidentiality.

Although the process of obtaining informed consent often involves having participants read and sign a consent form, it is important to understand that this written agreement is not all it is. Although having participants read and sign a consent form might be enough when they are competent adults with the necessary ability and motivation, many participants do not actually read consent forms or read them but do not understand them. For example, participants often mistake consent forms for legal documents and mistakenly believe that by signing them they give up their right to sue the healthcare provider or researcher (Mann, 1994). Even with competent adults, therefore, it is good practice to tell participants about the risks and benefits, demonstrate the procedure, ask them if they have questions, and remind them of their right to withdraw at any time—in addition to having them read and sign a consent form.

Note also that there are situations in which informed consent is not necessary. These include situations in which the research is not expected to cause any harm and the procedure is straightforward or the study is conducted in the context of people's ordinary activities. For example, if you wanted to sit outside a public building and observe whether people hold the door open for people behind them, you would not need to obtain their informed consent. Similarly, if a professor wanted to compare two legitimate teaching methods across two sections of her research methods course, she would not need to obtain informed consent from her students unless she planned to publish the results in a scientific journal about learning.

### Key Takeaways

- A complex ethical challenge involving stakeholders with competing moral claims frequently demands consideration of a variety of ethical principles and theories to address the situation and justify a proposed intervention.
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), gives patients rights over their health information, including the right to get a copy of their information, make sure it is correct, and know who has seen it.
- Even with competent adults, therefore, it is good practice to tell participants about the risks and benefits, demonstrate the procedure, ask them if they have questions, and remind them of their right to withdraw at any time—in addition to having them read and sign a consent form.

### Vocabulary

- **Autonomy** – Self-legislating; enacts from within the moral rules and principles that bind the will and guide action
- **Categorical Imperative** – An unconditional requirement for an action to be moral
- **Declaration of Helsinki** – Added to the Nuremberg Code that research with human participants should be based on a written protocol that is reviewed by an independent committee
- **Deontology** – An ethical theory that focuses on the rules governing action
- **Ethical Framework** – A tool or approach for practically addressing ethical challenges that often includes a stepwise procedure
- **Electronic Health Records (EHRs)** – Electronic version of a patient's medical history and other information about their health
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)** – A federal law that gives patients rights over their health information
- **Informed Consent** – Obtaining and documenting people's agreement to have a medical procedure or participate in a study, having informed them of everything that might reasonably be expected to affect their decision
- **Morality** – A society's shared, stable beliefs about what is good and bad, right and wrong
- **Nuremberg Code** – One of the earliest ethics codes; contained 10 principles for human research, including the importance of weighing risks against benefits and the need for informed consent
- **Principles** – General categories, rules, or guidelines that form the basis of a discipline
- **Utilitarianism** – An ethical theory that focuses on the result of an action
- **Virtue Ethics** – An ethical theory that focuses on the moral character of the actor or agent

## CHAPTER 5 TEST YOURSELF

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Please see Appendix C for an offline copy of the [Chapter 5 Test Yourself](#) activity. To view interactive H5P elements that have been excluded from this version of the text, please visit it online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=38#h5p-24>

## REFERENCES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

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### Why Are Ethics Important in Healthcare?

“[Ethics matters in health](#)” [YouTube video] by World Health Organization (WHO). All rights reserved.

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## **Confidentiality and HIPAA**

### *Health Information Privacy Rights*

“[HHS OCR – Your Health Information, Your Rights](#)” [YouTube video] by HHS OCR. All rights reserved.

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## **Benefits of Having EHRs**

“[Privacy, Security, and Electronic Health Records](#)” from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under public domain. Lightly edited for tone and reformatted for consistency with its new context.

### *Sharing Health Information with Family Members and Friends*

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## **Consent in Healthcare and Research**

### *Historical Overview*

“[From Moral Principles to Ethics Codes](#)” in *Research Methods in Psychology (2nd Canadian Edition)* by Paul C. Price, Rajiv S. Jhangiani, and I-Chant A. Chiang. Published under a [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) license. Lightly edited for tone and to change to American spelling conventions.

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## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

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**Image 5.1:** This image depicts tiles spelling out the following words: Values, Respect, Integrity, Ethics. Values and Respect, Respect and Integrity, and Integrity and Ethics intersect where they share a common letter. [\[Return to Image 5.1\]](#).

**Image 5.2:** This image depicts a male doctor using an electronic tablet. [\[Return to Image 5.2\]](#).

**Image 5.3:** This image is a close-up photograph of a hand holding a test tube in a laboratory. The test tube contains a model of a double helix. [\[Return to Image 5.3\]](#).



## Chapter 6: Professionalism

### Learning Objectives

- Assess why professionalism is important for those that work in all healthcare settings.
- Analyze how healthcare professionals approach challenging situations when working alone and when working together.
- Examine the components of professional conduct and the importance of interprofessional collaborative practice.

### INTRODUCTION

What is professionalism? A profession is an occupation that involves mastery of complex knowledge and skills through prolonged training, education, or practical experience. Becoming a member of a specific profession doesn't happen overnight. Whether you seek to be a physical therapist, medical laboratory scientist, athletic trainer, nurse, or health educator, each profession requires interested parties to invest themselves in learning to become a professional or a member of a profession who earns their living through specified expert activity. It's much easier to define the terms "profession" and "professional" than it is to define the term "professionalism" because each profession will have its take on what it means to be a professional within a given field. According to the United States Department of Labor (n.d.), **professionalism** "does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive." The U.S. Department of Labor's book *Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success* goes on to note:

Professionalism isn't one thing; it's a combination of qualities. A professional employee arrives on time for work and manages time effectively. Professional workers take responsibility for their own behavior and work effectively with others. High-quality work standards, honesty, and integrity are also part of the package. Professional employees look clean and neat and dress appropriately for the job. Communicating effectively and appropriately for the workplace is also an essential part of professionalism.

### DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism isn't a single "thing" that can be labeled. Instead, professionalism refers to the aims and behaviors that demonstrate an individual's level of competence expected by a professional within a given profession. By the

#### Chapter Resources

[Key Takeaways](#)[Vocabulary](#)[Test Yourself](#)

word “aims,” we mean that someone who exhibits professionalism is guided by a set of goals in a professional setting. Whether the aim is to complete a project on time or help ensure higher quarterly incomes for the organization, professionalism involves striving to help one’s organization achieve specific goals. By “behaviors,” we mean specific ways of behaving and communicating within an organizational environment. Some common behaviors can include acting ethically, respecting others, collaborating effectively, taking personal and professional responsibility, and using language professionally. In the following sections, we will explore each of these behaviors separately.

## BE APPROPRIATE

---

Avoid oversharing personal or family information with your coworkers or boss. Be careful what you say and post about work (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). A best practice is to avoid talking about any work-related issues with people outside of your closest family and friends, and even then, you should be cautious. Word can spread like wildfire and you wouldn’t want to lose your job over hearsay. Refrain from complaining about work and posting negative work-related content on social media. Despite your privacy settings, you can’t be sure that that information won’t get back to your employers or colleagues.

## BE PRESENTABLE AND DRESS APPROPRIATELY

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Always maintain a level of professionalism through your work attire, hygiene, and visual presentation (Piccirilli, 2018). Take note of the workplace dress code; until you have a better idea of what it is, take a conservative and simple approach to dress. Even if your workplace is more casual in nature, it is important to come to work clean, neat, and well-groomed. If you are representing yourself professionally, you are helping the employer to be seen in a professional light as well.

## BE PUNCTUAL AND RESPECTFUL

---

Consistently showing up for work and showing up on time indicates that you’re serious about your job. It’s not only important to be punctual about arriving to work, but also to be on time for meetings and follow the prescribed times for breaks or other scheduled work gatherings. If you know you are going to be late, be courteous. Pick up the phone or send an email and let your employer know when you will be there (always offer to reschedule if that is more convenient for others). When you are able to meet your commitments, it tells an employer that they can depend on you.

## CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS AND ASK FOR FEEDBACK

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Sometimes an employer may not have the time or resources to review your job expectations with you in detail. To ensure you’re performing adequately at your new job, review your job duties very carefully, then identify your main responsibilities and how much time you should be spending on each. This is a fail-proof way to ensure you’re on target with what your employer expects, however, if you are unclear about what this looks like, don’t hesitate to clarify at any time. Along the same lines, if you want to make sure you’re on the right track, set up a time to meet with your manager and ask for feedback on your progress so far (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

## BE HONEST AND OWN YOUR MISTAKES

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It’s not the end of the world if you make a mistake on the job, it just makes you human. The worst thing to do is

to lie about it. If you take responsibility for your mistake and avoid making excuses, it will show a great deal of maturity (Half, 2016). Employers will appreciate your honesty and your ability to handle a situation like this. If you show them you're willing to learn the proper way to do something, to avoid this happening again in the future, you will be more likely to build a trusting relationship (Piccirilli, 2018).

### FOLLOW THROUGH ON WHAT YOU SAY

---

Be a person of your word, if you can be relied on to do what you say you're going to do, an employer is eventually going to see you as their go-to person (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). When your words match your behaviors, it makes it easier for an employer to trust you and they will ultimately be more likely to recommend, praise, and invest in you. On the contrary, not actively following through on what you say can paint a negative picture of you to an employer; they may assume you are undependable or even uninterested in the job.

### DEMONSTRATE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

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You may have experienced working with someone negative in the past, which is why it's so important for employers to want their employees to exhibit positivity. If you have a bad attitude this may impact how well you do your job or how you communicate with other people. People tend to remember the bad things; you certainly don't want your employer to remember you as the complainer. Positivity is a highly sought-after quality on the job, as it tends to be a morale booster and increase the enjoyment of a work environment significantly.

### KNOW AND UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE AND YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE AND ASK FOR HELP WHEN NEEDED

---

Many of us make the mistake of wanting to prove we can do something on our own, or sometimes we're just scared to ask for help because we think it might be seen unfavorably by our managers (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). The opposite of this is true; employers want you to ask questions and ask for help when you're unsure of how to do something. Employers would rather you ask the questions you need in order to do the job correctly than potentially cost them time and money on careless, easily preventable mistakes. That being said, if you have a number of questions, collect them and schedule a time to meet with your manager to discuss them all at once – this will eliminate multiple interruptions.

### BE A PROBLEM SOLVER AND A PEACEMAKER

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Regardless of the job, we can't escape day-to-day problems, whether they are personality differences between colleagues or roadblocks in our daily tasks or projects. What's important for an employer to see is how you're able to handle it when the situation is appropriate. An employer is seeking those that can manage conflict through effective negotiation and communication skills in a diplomatic, respectful, and calm manner. Furthermore, when you are able to manage unforeseen problems by identifying a plan and proposing possible solutions, you are taking this off the employer's plate and allowing them to spend their time managing more pertinent concerns (Half, 2016). When an employer has to frequently intervene in these situations it can take away from how competently they view you in your role.

### BE SELF-AWARE

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Be honest with yourself (and others!) about your strengths and your challenges. Realize that you are not perfect

and that every person needs to grow and learn continually throughout their careers. Self-evaluate regularly and set specific goals for yourself that are both measurable and achievable. When you experience conflict or misunderstandings, ask yourself what you could have done differently. When you receive constructive criticism, consider ways in which you can improve.

## STAY CALM IN STRESSFUL SITUATIONS AND MANAGE DISAPPOINTMENT

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Emotional intelligence is a highly-valued trait, both in the career world and in everyday life. Resilience is closely related to emotional intelligence. In the video below, The Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.) explains that two vital components of emotional intelligence are becoming more self-aware to understand your own emotions and using active listening skills to learn empathy.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=44#oembed-1>

Media 6.1. *Emotional intelligence in the workplace* [Online video]. Copyright 2018 by [MindToolsVideos](#).

## ADAPT TO CHANGE

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With changes happening all around us, you're bound to experience a number of work-related changes in your time. Being flexible and open-minded to those changes will help to reduce the amount of stress you are experiencing and allow you to navigate unexpected changes in your work environment in a more positive and constructive way. Work changes can take their toll on morale, when employees are more adaptable, they will help set the tone for a more seamless transition across the team.

## BE SELF-MOTIVATED

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Just like many workplaces, health and wellness workplaces are busy and employers value employees who can work with little-to-no supervision. This type of person sees what needs to be done and does it. They never sit idle and find ways to keep themselves busy by helping their colleagues or catching up on work that was left undone.

## BE ORGANIZED

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Organization skills are important in every aspect of life and are absolutely essential to the workplace. Being organized decreases stress, saves time, and increases productivity. Piccirilli (2018) suggests keeping a tidy workspace and using a planner. Read this [article](#) to help you improve your organizational skills.

## INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

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### INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE SKILLS

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A critical skill for healthcare professionals is the ability to work efficiently and effectively with other healthcare workers. For example, a person working in patient care may need to interact with their core team, contingency teams, ancillary and support services, administration, and the patient. A team consists of two or more individuals who interact dynamically, interdependently, and adaptively toward a common and valued goal, have specific roles or functions, and have a time-limited membership. Teams within healthcare must learn to communicate, coordinate, and effectively think and feel as a team by enacting necessary teamwork processes.

**Teamwork processes** can be defined as interrelated knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow teams to work together to accomplish interdependent goals, such as problem-solving or providing optimal care to a patient. A team with the proper teamwork structure can anticipate the needs of other team members, dynamically adjust to a changing environment (including changing behaviors of team members), and have a shared understanding of what should happen.

- **Knowledge:** Teams whose members have strong communication, leadership, situation monitoring, and mutual support capabilities yield important team outcomes such as shared awareness about what is going on with the team and progress toward its goal. Team members will also be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of their teammates.
- **Attitudes:** When you work in teams in which the members have good communication, leadership, situation monitoring, and mutual support skills, team members are more likely to have a positive experience; you will enjoy working in teams and trust the intentions of your teammates.
- **Performance:** You'll be able to adapt to changes in the care plan. Team members will know when and how to back up each other. You'll be more efficient in providing care; you will have a plan, and you will know who is supposed to do what, and how they are supposed to do it. Finally, your team will be safer, allowing the team to more readily identify and correct errors if they occur.

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teamwork complement clinical excellence and improve patient outcomes, because teams use feedback cycles and clearly defined tools to communicate, plan, and deliver better quality care.

All healthcare students must prepare to deliberately work together in clinical practice with a common goal of building a safer, more effective, patient-centered healthcare system. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2010) defines **interprofessional collaborative practice** as multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds working together with patients, families, caregivers, and communities to deliver the highest quality of care.

Effective teamwork and communication have been proven to reduce medical errors, promote a safety culture, and improve patient outcomes (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality [AHRQ], 2015). The importance of effective interprofessional collaboration has become even more important as healthcare professionals advocate to reduce health disparities related to social determinants of health (SDOH). In these efforts, healthcare professionals work with people from a variety of professions, such as physicians, social workers, educators, policymakers, attorneys, faith leaders, government employees, community advocates, and community members. Healthcare students must be prepared to effectively collaborate interprofessionally after graduation (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021).

The Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) has identified four core competencies for effective interprofessional collaborative practice. This section will review content related to these four core competencies and provide examples of how they relate to different health professions.

## IPEC CORE COMPETENCIES

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The Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) established standard core competencies for effective interprofessional collaborative practice. The competencies guide the education of future health professionals with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to collaboratively work together in providing client care. See [Table 6.1](#) for a description of the four IPEC core competencies. Each of these competencies will be further discussed in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

**Table 6.1: The Four IPEC Core Competencies**

### **Competency 1: Values/Ethics for Interprofessional Practice**

Work with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values.

### **Competency 2: Roles/Responsibilities:**

Use the knowledge of one's own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address the healthcare needs of patients and to promote and advance the health of populations.

### **Competency 3: Interprofessional Communication**

Communicate with patients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion and maintenance of health and the prevention and treatment of disease.

### **Competency 4: Teams and Teamwork**

Apply relationship-building values and the principles of team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan, deliver, and evaluate patient/population-centered care and population health programs and policies that are safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.

Source: [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: 2017 Update](#) from the Interprofessional Education Collaborative.

## Values and Ethics for Interprofessional Practice

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The first IPEC competency is related to values and ethics and states, "Work with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values" (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2016). See the table below for the components related to this competency.

### *Components of IPEC's Values/Ethics for Interprofessional Practice Competency*

- Place interests of clients and populations at the center of interprofessional healthcare delivery and population health programs and policies, with the goal of promoting health and health equity across the lifespan.
- Respect the dignity and privacy of patients while maintaining confidentiality in the delivery of team-based care.
- Embrace the cultural diversity and individual differences that characterize patients, populations, and the health team.
- Respect the unique cultures, values, roles/responsibilities, and expertise of other health professions and the impact these factors can have on health outcomes.
- Work in cooperation with those who receive care, those who provide care, and others who contribute to or support the delivery of prevention and health services and programs.
- Develop a trusting relationship with patients, families, and other team members.
- Demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct and quality of care in contributions to team-based care.
- Manage ethical dilemmas specific to interprofessional patient/population-centered care situations.
- Act with honesty and integrity in relationships with patients, families, communities, and other team members.
- Maintain competence in one's own profession appropriate to scope of practice.

Source: [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: 2017 Update](#) from the Interprofessional Education Collaborative.

Nursing, medical, and other health professional programs typically educate students in “silos” with few opportunities to collaboratively work together in the classroom or in clinical settings. However, after being hired for their first job, these graduates are thrown into complex clinical situations and expected to function as part of the team.

One of the first steps in learning how to function as part of an effective interprofessional team is to value each healthcare professional's contribution to quality, patient-centered care. Mutual respect and trust are foundational to effective interprofessional working relationships for collaborative care delivery across the health professions. Collaborative care also honors the diversity reflected in the individual expertise each profession brings to care delivery (Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel, 2011)



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*Media 6.2. How does interprofessional collaboration impact care? The patient's perspective (2/7) [Online video] by [Darío García Rodríguez](#). Published under a [CC BY 3.0](#) license.*

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The second IPEC competency relates to the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals and states, “Use the knowledge of one’s own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address the healthcare needs of patients and to promote and advance the health of populations” (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2016).

See the following box for the components of this competency. It is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of the other healthcare team members, and to recognize one’s limitations in skills, knowledge, and abilities. One should also ask for assistance when needed to provide quality, patient-centered care.

### *Components of IPEC’s Roles/Responsibilities Competency*

- Communicate one’s roles and responsibilities clearly to patients, families, community members, and other professionals.
- Recognize one’s limitations in skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- Engage with diverse professionals who complement one’s own professional expertise, as well as associated resources, to develop strategies to meet specific health and healthcare needs of patients and populations.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of other providers and the manner in which the team works together to provide care, promote health, and prevent disease.
- Use the full scope of knowledge, skills, and abilities of professionals from health and other fields to provide care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.
- Communicate with team members to clarify each member’s responsibility in executing components of a treatment plan or public health intervention.
- Forge interdependent relationships with other professions within and outside of the health system to improve care and advance learning.
- Engage in continuous professional and interprofessional development to enhance team performance and collaboration.
- Use unique and complementary abilities of all members of the team to optimize health and patient care.
- Describe how professionals in health and other fields can collaborate and integrate clinical care and public health interventions to optimize population health.

Source: [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: 2017 Update](#) from the Interprofessional Education Collaborative.

Healthcare professionals communicate with several individuals during a typical shift. For example, during inpatient care, nurses may communicate with the following: patients and their family members; pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; providers from different specialties; physical, speech, and occupational therapists; dietary aides; respiratory therapists; chaplains; social workers; case managers; nursing supervisors, charge nurses, and other staff nurses; assistive personnel; nursing students; nursing instructors; security guards; laboratory personnel; radiology and ultrasound technicians; and surgical team members.

Providing holistic, quality, safe, and effective care means every team member taking care of patients must work collaboratively and understand the knowledge, skills, and scope of practice of the other team members. The table below provides examples of the roles and responsibilities of common healthcare team members that nurses

frequently work with when providing patient care. To fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the multiple members of the complex healthcare delivery system, it is beneficial to spend time shadowing those within these roles.

### *Healthcare Team Roles*

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- **Advanced Practical Nurses (APRNs)**
  - Coordinate patient care and may provide primary and specialty healthcare. They work independently or in collaboration with physicians.
- **Athletic Trainers (ATs)**
  - Specialize in preventing, diagnosing, and treating muscle and bone injuries and illnesses. Not to be confused with fitness trainers and instructors.
- **Behavior Analysts**
  - Observe and analyze the behavior of individuals in order to develop treatment plans that improve skill repertoires, safety, and quality of life. Includes Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs) and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs).
- **Chiropractors**
  - Evaluate and treat patients' neuromusculoskeletal system using spinal adjustments and manipulation, as well as other clinical interventions.
- **Clinical Laboratory Scientists (CLSs)**
  - Perform medical laboratory tests that physicians, surgeons, or other healthcare practitioners order for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease.
- **Community Health Workers (CHWs)**
  - Act as intermediaries between residents and healthcare and social services providers. They identify health-related issues, collect data, and discuss health concerns within the community.
- **Dentists**
  - Diagnose and treat problems with patients' teeth, gums, and related parts of the mouth.
- **Dietitians and Nutritionists**
  - Help prevent or support treatment of health conditions such as heart disease, autoimmune disease, and obesity. They plan and conduct food service or nutritional programs to help people lead healthy lives.
- **Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs)**
  - Physicians who, compared to MDs, place additional emphasis on the body's musculoskeletal system, preventive medicine, and holistic (whole-person) patient care.

- **Emergency Management Directors (EMDs)**
  - Prepare plans and procedures for responding to natural disasters and other emergencies. Directors work with government agencies, nonprofits, private companies, and the public.
- **Exercise Physiologists (EPs)**
  - Develop fitness and exercise programs that help patients recover from chronic diseases and improve cardiovascular function, body composition, and flexibility. Not to be confused with fitness trainers and instructors or athletic trainers.
- **Health Education Specialists (HESs)**
  - Teach people about behaviors that promote wellness. They develop strategies to improve the well-being of individuals and communities.
- **Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs)**
  - Provide basic medical care to ill, injured, or convalescing patients or to persons with disabilities. They typically work under the supervision of registered nurses and doctors.
- **Medical and Health Services Managers and Administrators**
  - Plan, direct, and coordinate medical and health services. They may manage an entire facility, a specific clinical area or department, or a medical practice for a group of physicians.
- **Medical Doctors (MDs)**
  - Diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses and address health maintenance.
- **Occupational Therapists (OTs)**
  - Treat injured, ill, or disabled patients through the therapeutic use of everyday activities.
- **Pharmacists**
  - Dispense prescription medications to patients and offer expertise in the safe use of prescriptions.
- **Physical Therapists (PTs)**
  - Help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain. They are often an important part of preventive care, rehabilitation, and treatment for patients with chronic conditions, illnesses, or injuries.
- **Psychiatrists**
  - Diagnose and treat mental illnesses through a combination of personal counseling (psychotherapy), psychoanalysis, hospitalization, and medication.
- **Psychologists**
  - Study cognitive, emotional, and social processes and behavior by observing, interpreting, and recording how people relate to one another and to their environments. They use their findings to help improve processes and

behaviors.

- **Registered Nurses (RNs)**
  - Provide and coordinate patient care, educate patients and the public about various health conditions, and provide advice and emotional support to patients and their families.
- **Respiratory Therapists (RTs)**
  - Care for patients who have conditions that cause them to have trouble breathing.
- **Social Workers (SWs)**
  - Help individuals, groups, and families prevent and cope with problems in their everyday lives. Clinical social workers and licensed clinical social workers diagnose and treat mental, behavioral, and emotional problems.
- **Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)**
  - Assess and treat people who have speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders.

The coordination and delivery of safe, quality patient care demand reliable teamwork and collaboration across organizational and community boundaries. Patients often have multiple visits across multiple providers working in different organizations. Communication failures between healthcare settings, departments, and team members are the leading cause of patient harm (Rosen et al., 2018). Our healthcare system is becoming increasingly complex requiring collaboration among diverse healthcare team members.

The goal of good interprofessional collaboration is improved patient outcomes, as well as increased job satisfaction of healthcare team professionals. Patients receiving care with poor teamwork are almost five times as likely to experience complications or death. Hospitals in which staff report higher levels of teamwork have lower rates of workplace injuries and illness, fewer incidents of workplace harassment and violence, and lower turnover (Rosen et al., 2018). Valuing and understanding the roles of team members are important steps toward establishing good interprofessional teamwork. Another step is learning how to effectively communicate with interprofessional team members.

## INTERPROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

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The third IPEC competency focuses on interprofessional communication and states, “Communicate with patients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion and maintenance of health and the prevention and treatment of disease” (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2016). This competency also aligns with The Joint Commission’s (2023) National Patient Safety Goal for improving staff communication. See the following box for the components associated with the Interprofessional Communication competency.

### *Components of IPEC's Interprofessional Communication Competency*

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- Choose effective communication tools and techniques, including information systems and communication technologies, to facilitate discussions and interactions that enhance team function.
- Communicate information with patients, families, community members, and health team members in a form that is understandable, avoiding discipline-specific terminology when possible.
- Express one's knowledge and opinions to team members involved in patient care and population health improvement with confidence, clarity, and respect, working to ensure common understanding of information, treatment, care decisions, and population health programs and policies.
- Listen actively and encourage ideas and opinions of other team members.
- Give timely, sensitive, constructive feedback to others about their performance on the team, responding respectfully as a team member to feedback from others.
- Use respectful language appropriate for a given difficult situation, crucial conversation, or conflict.
- Recognize how one's uniqueness (experience level, expertise, culture, power, and hierarchy within the healthcare team) contributes to effective communication, conflict resolution, and positive interprofessional working relationships.
- Communicate the importance of teamwork in patient-centered care and population health programs and policies.

Source: [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: 2017 Update](#) from the Interprofessional Education Collaborative.

Transmission of information among members of the healthcare team and facilities is ongoing and critical to quality care. However, information that is delayed, inefficient, or inadequate creates barriers to providing quality care. Communication barriers continue to exist in healthcare environments due to interprofessional team members' lack of experience when interacting with other disciplines. For instance, many novice nurses enter the workforce without experiencing communication with other members of the healthcare team (e.g., providers, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, social workers, surgical staff, dieticians, physical therapists, et cetera). Additionally, healthcare professionals tend to develop a professional identity based on their educational program with a distinction made between groups. This distinction can cause tension between professional groups due to diverse training and perspectives on providing quality patient care. In addition, a healthcare organization's environment may not be conducive to effectively sharing information with multiple staff members across multiple units. In addition to potential educational, psychological, and organizational barriers to sharing information, there can also be general barriers that impact interprofessional communication and collaboration. See the following box for a list of these general barriers.

### *General Barriers to Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration*

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- Personal values and expectations
- Personality differences
- Organizational hierarchy

- Lack of cultural humility
- Generational differences
- Historical interprofessional and intraprofessional rivalries
- Differences in language and medical jargon
- Differences in schedules and professional routines
- Varying levels of preparation, qualifications, and status
- Differences in requirements, regulations, and norms of professional education
- Fears of diluted professional identity
- Differences in accountability and reimbursement models
- Diverse clinical responsibilities
- Increased complexity of patient care
- Emphasis on rapid decision-making

Source: O'Daniel & Rosenstein (2011).

Since teams and teamwork is a culmination of all that you have learned by reviewing the first three IPEC competencies, this book is dedicating an entire section to this topic next.

## TEAMS AND TEAMWORK

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Now that we have reviewed the first three IPEC competencies related to valuing team members, understanding team members' roles and responsibilities, and using structured interprofessional communication strategies, let's discuss strategies that promote effective teamwork. The fourth IPEC competency states, "Apply relationship-building values and the principles of team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles to plan, deliver, and evaluate patient/population-centered care and population health programs and policies that are safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable" (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2016). See the following box for the components of this IPEC competency.

### Components of IPEC's Teams and Teamwork Competency

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- Describe the process of team development and the roles and practices of effective teams.
- Develop consensus on the ethical principles to guide all aspects of teamwork.
- Engage health and other professionals in shared patient-centered and population-focused problem-solving.
- Integrate the knowledge and experience of health and other professions to inform health and care decisions, while respecting patient and community values and priorities/preferences for care.
- Apply leadership practices that support collaborative practice and team effectiveness.

- Engage self and others to constructively manage disagreements about values, roles, goals, and actions that arise among health and other professionals and with patients, families, and community members.
- Share accountability with other professions, patients, and communities for outcomes relevant to prevention and healthcare.
- Reflect on individual and team performance for individual, as well as team performance improvement.
- Use process improvement to increase the effectiveness of interprofessional teamwork and team-based services, programs, and policies.
- Use available evidence to inform effective teamwork and team-based practices.
- Perform effectively on teams and in different team roles in a variety of settings.

Source: [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: 2017 Update](#) from the Interprofessional Education Collaborative.

Developing effective teams is critical for providing healthcare that is patient-centered, safe, timely, effective, efficient, and equitable (Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel, 2011). Healthcare professionals collaborate with the interprofessional team by not only assigning and coordinating tasks but also by promoting solid teamwork in a positive environment. A healthcare leader, such as a charge nurse, identifies gaps in workflow, recognizes when task overload is occurring, and promotes the adaptability of the team to respond to evolving patient conditions. The qualities of a successful team are described in the following box.

### Qualities of a Successful Team

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- Promote a respectful atmosphere
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for team members
- Regularly and routinely share information
- Encourage open communication
- Implement a culture of safety
- Provide clear directions
- Share responsibility for team success
- Balance team member participation based on the current situation
- Acknowledge and manage conflict
- Enforce accountability among all team members
- Communicate the decision-making process
- Facilitate access to needed resources
- Evaluate team outcomes and adjust as needed

Source: O'Daniel & Rosenstein (2011).

## TEAMSTEPS

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**TeamSTEPS®** is an evidence-based framework used to optimize team performance across the healthcare system. It is a mnemonic standing for Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety. The AHRQ (2012) and the Department of Defense (DoD) developed the TeamSTEPS® framework as a national initiative to improve patient safety by improving teamwork skills and communication.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=44#oembed-3>

*Media 6.3. TeamSTEPS Overview [Online video]. Copyright 2015 by [AHRQ Patient Safety](#).*

## TEAM STRUCTURE

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A healthcare leader establishes team structure by assigning or identifying team members' roles and responsibilities, holding team members accountable, and including patients and families as part of the team.

### Communication

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**Communication** is the first skill of the TeamSTEPS® framework. As previously discussed, it is defined as a "structured process by which information is clearly and accurately exchanged among team members" (AHRQ, 2014). All team members should use these skills to ensure accurate interprofessional communication:

- Provide brief, clear, specific, and timely information to other team members.
- Seek information from all available sources.
- Use ISBAR (Identify, Situation, Background, Assessment, and Recommendation) and handoff techniques to communicate effectively with team members.
- Use closed-loop communication to verify information is communicated, understood, and completed.
- Document appropriately to facilitate continuity of care across interprofessional team members (AHRQ, 2014).

### Leadership

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**Leadership** is the second skill of the TeamSTEPS® framework. As previously discussed, it is defined as the "ability to maximize the activities of team members by ensuring that team actions are understood, changes in information are shared, and team members have the necessary resources" (AHRQ, 2014). An example of a healthcare team leader in an inpatient setting is the charge nurse.

Effective team leaders demonstrate the following responsibilities:

- Organize the team.

- Identify and articulate clear goals (i.e., share the plan).
- Assign tasks and responsibilities.
- Monitor and modify the plan and communicate changes.
- Review the team's performance and provide feedback when needed.
- Manage and allocate resources.
- Facilitate information sharing.
- Encourage team members to assist one another.
- Facilitate conflict resolution in a learning environment.
- Model effective teamwork (AHRQ, 2014).

Three major leadership tasks include sharing a plan, monitoring and modifying the plan according to situations that occur, and reviewing team performance. Tools to perform these tasks are discussed in the following subsections.

### *Sharing the plan*

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Healthcare team leaders identify and articulate clear goals to the team at the start of the shift during inpatient care using a "brief." The **brief** is a short session to share a plan, discuss team formation, assign roles and responsibilities, establish expectations and climate, and anticipate outcomes and contingencies (AHRQ, 2014)

### *Monitoring and modifying the plan*

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Throughout the shift, it is often necessary for the team leader to modify the initial plan as patient situations change on the unit. A **huddle** is a brief meeting before and/or during a shift to establish situational awareness, reinforce plans already in place, and adjust the teamwork plan as needed (AHRQ, 2014). Read more about situational awareness in the "Situation Monitoring" subsection below.

### *Reviewing the team's performance*

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When a significant or emergent event occurs during a shift, such as a "code," it is important to later review the team's performance and reflect on lessons learned by holding a "debrief" session. A **debrief** is an informal information exchange session designed to improve team performance and effectiveness through reinforcement of positive behaviors and reflection on lessons learned (AHRQ, 2014).

### **Situation Monitoring**

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**Situation monitoring** is the third skill of the TeamSTEPPS® framework and is defined as the "process of actively scanning and assessing situational elements to gain information or understanding, or to maintain awareness to support team functioning (AHRQ, 2014). Situation monitoring refers to the process of continually scanning and assessing the situation to gain and maintain an understanding of what is going on around you. Situation awareness refers to a team member knowing what is going on around them. The team leader creates a shared mental model to ensure all team members have situation awareness and know what is going on as situations evolve. The STEP tool is used by team leaders to assist with situation monitoring (AHRQ, 2014).

## STEP

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The **STEP tool** is a situation monitoring tool used to know what is going on with you, your patients, your team, and your environment. STEP stands for Status of the patient, Team members, Environment, and Progress toward goal (AHRQ, 2014).

### Cross-monitoring

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As the STEP tool is implemented, the team leader continues to cross-monitor to reduce the incidence of errors. Cross-monitoring includes the following:

- Monitoring the actions of other team members.
- Providing a safety net within the team.
- Ensuring that mistakes or oversights are caught quickly and easily.
- Supporting each other as needed (AHRQ, 2014).

### I'M SAFE checklist

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The **I'M SAFE** mnemonic is a tool used to assess one's own safety status, as well as that of other team members in their ability to provide safe patient care. See the I'M SAFE Checklist in the following box (AHRQ, 2014). If a team member feels their ability to provide safe care is diminished because of one of these factors, they should notify the charge nurse or other nursing supervisor. In a similar manner, if a nurse notices that another member of the team is impaired or providing care in an unsafe manner, it is an ethical imperative to protect clients and report their concerns according to agency policy (AHRQ, 2014).

#### *I'm Safe Checklist*

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- **I:** Illness
- **M:** Medication
- **S:** Stress
- **A:** Alcohol and Drugs
- **F:** Fatigue
- **E:** Eating and Elimination

## Mutual Support

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**Mutual support** is the fourth skill of the TeamSTEPPS® framework and is defined as the “ability to anticipate and support team members’ needs through accurate knowledge about their responsibilities and workload (AHRQ, 2014). Mutual support includes providing task assistance, giving feedback, and advocating for patient safety by using assertive statements to correct a safety concern. Managing conflict is also a component of supporting team members’ needs.

### Task assistance

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Helping other team members with tasks builds a strong team. Task assistance includes the following components:

- Team members protect each other from work-overload situations.
- Effective teams place all offers and requests for assistance in the context of patient safety.
- Team members foster a climate where it is expected that assistance will be actively sought and offered (AHRQ, 2014).

### Feedback

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Feedback is provided to a team member for the purpose of improving team performance. Effective feedback should follow these parameters:

- *Timely*: Provided soon after the target behavior has occurred.
- *Respectful*: Focused on behaviors, not personal attributes.
- *Specific*: Related to a specific task or behavior that requires correction or improvement.
- *Directed towards improvement*: Suggestions are made for future improvement.
- *Considerate*: Team members' feelings should be considered and privacy provided. Negative information should be delivered with fairness and respect (AHRQ, 2014).

### Advocating for safety with assertive statements

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When a team member perceives a potential patient safety concern, they should assertively communicate with the decision-maker to protect patient safety. This strategy holds true for all team members, no matter their position within the hierarchy of the healthcare environment. The message should be communicated to the decision-maker in a firm and respectful manner using the following steps:

- Make an opening.
- State the concern.
- State the problem (real or perceived).
- Offer a solution.
- Reach agreement on next steps (AHRQ, 2014).

### Two-challenge rule

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When an assertive statement is ignored by the decision-maker, the team member should assertively voice their concern at least two times to ensure that it has been heard by the decision-maker. This strategy is referred to as the two-challenge rule. When this rule is adopted as a policy by a healthcare organization, it empowers all team members to pause care if they sense or discover an essential safety breach. The decision-maker being challenged is expected to acknowledge the concern has been heard (AHRQ, 2014).

### CUS assertive statements

During emergent situations, when stress levels are high or when situations are charged with emotion, the decisionmaker may not “hear” the message being communicated, even when the two-challenge rule is implemented. It is helpful for agencies to establish assertive statements that are well-recognized by all staff as the implementation of the two-challenge rule. These assertive statements are referred to as the **CUS mnemonic**: “I am **C**oncerned – I am **U**ncomfortable – This is a **S**afety issue!” (AHRQ, 2014).

Using these scripted messages may effectively catch the attention of the decision-maker. However, if the safety issue still isn’t addressed after the second statement or the use of “CUS” assertive statements, the team member should take a stronger course of action and utilize the agency’s chain of command. For the two-challenge rule and CUS assertive statements to be effective within an agency, administrators must support a culture of safety and emphasize the importance of these initiatives to promote patient safety.

### Managing conflict

Conflict is not uncommon on interprofessional teams, especially when there are diverse perspectives from multiple staff regarding patient care. Nurse leaders must be prepared to manage conflict to support the needs of their team members. When conflict occurs, the DESC tool can be used to help resolve conflict by using “I statements.” **DESC** is a mnemonic that stands for the following:

- **D**: Describe the specific situation or behavior; provide concrete data.
- **E**: Express how the situation makes you feel/what your concerns are using “I” statements.
- **S**: Suggest other alternatives and seek agreement.
- **C**: Consequences stated in terms of impact on established team goals while striving for consensus (AHRQ, 2014).

The DESC tool should be implemented in a private area with a focus on WHAT is right, not WHO is right.

#### Key Takeaways

- Professionalism means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence while also communicating effectively and appropriately.
- A critical skill for healthcare professionals is the ability to work efficiently and effectively with other healthcare workers.
- Healthcare professionals collaborate with the interprofessional team by not only assigning and coordinating tasks but also by promoting solid teamwork in a positive environment.

#### Vocabulary

- **Brief** – A short session to share a plan, discuss team formation, assign roles and responsibilities, establish expectations and climate, and anticipate outcomes and contingencies

- **Communication** – Structured process by which information is clearly and accurately exchanged among team members
- **CUS** – Mnemonic to catch the attention of a decision-maker during emergent situations; stands for “I am Concerned – I am Uncomfortable – This is a Safety issue!”
- **Debrief** – An informal information exchange session designed to improve team performance and effectiveness through reinforcement of positive behaviors and reflection on lessons learned
- **DESC** – Mnemonic to manage conflict among team members; stands for Describe the situation or behavior, Express how it makes you feel or what your concerns are, Suggest other alternatives and seek agreement, and Consequences (impact on established team goals)
- **Huddle** – A brief meeting before and/or during a shift to establish situational awareness, reinforce plans already in place, and adjust the teamwork plan as needed
- **I'M SAFE** – Mnemonic tool used to assess one's own safety status and the safety status of other team members
- **Interprofessional Collaborative Practice** – Multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds working together to deliver the highest quality of care
- **Leadership** – The ability to maximize the activities of team members by ensuring that team actions are understood, changes in information are shared, and team members have the necessary resources
- **Mutual Support** – The ability to anticipate and support team members' needs through accurate knowledge about their responsibilities and workload
- **Professionalism** – Conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence
- **Situation Monitoring** – The process of actively scanning and assessing situational elements to gain information or understanding, or to maintain awareness to support team functioning
- **STEP Tool** – A situation monitoring tool; stands for Status of the patients, Team members, Environment, and Progress toward goal
- **TeamSTEPPS®** – An evidence-based framework to optimize team performance across the healthcare system
- **Teamwork Processes** – The interrelated knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow teams to work together to accomplish interdependent goals

## CHAPTER 6 TEST YOURSELF

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Please see Appendix C for an offline copy of the [Chapter 6 Test Yourself](#) activity. To view interactive H5P elements that have been excluded from this version of the text, please visit it online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=44#h5p-26>

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## Interprofessional Collaboration

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## Chapter 7: Communication in Healthcare

### Learning Objectives

- Evaluate interprofessional and patient/family communication in healthcare.
- Explore electronic and nonverbal communication in healthcare.
- Examine intercultural communication.

### INTRODUCTION

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Professional communication is an important part of becoming a healthcare professional and being a healthcare student. You are entering a “profession” which means there are certain expectations in terms of your professional conduct specifically in terms of how you communicate with your fellow healthcare team members, your patients, and their family members. Professional communication involves a level of formality and is an important component of your post-secondary education. It is different than the informal communication that you may engage in with your friends and family. It also applies to your verbal and written communication including emails.

#### Chapter Resources

[Key Takeaways](#)

[Vocabulary](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

## COMMUNICATION IN THE CLINIC

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### INTERPROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

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A **healthcare team** is a group of professionals contributing to the care and treatment of a patient. The team typically consists of professionals from interdisciplinary areas such as physicians, nurses, and technologists. Communication among members of a healthcare team is essential for quality patient care and effective team performance. Building cooperative and respectful team relationships assist in a patient's perception of the care they are receiving. Critical patient information needs to be shared with members of healthcare teams to ensure a collaborative approach. Conversely, lack of communication creates opportunities for errors to occur, quality of care diminished, and can place patient safety at risk.



*Image 7.1. Interdisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals work together to give patients high-quality care. [Image description].*

### INTERPERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTHCARE TEAMS

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Many components are involved in working effectively in a healthcare team. Communication channels bring the team together to enable patient-centered care. Therapeutic communication is an important tool that helps put the patient at ease and builds trust in the healthcare team. When managing patient care each member of the team will have their own interpretation of the information presented and how the information is acted upon can be dependent on each member's uniqueness, expertise, and level of involvement within the team.

Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between two or more people involving verbal and nonverbal methods. Developed interpersonal communication skills are vital to ensure collaboration with team members to support the best interest of patients. In most healthcare settings, teams are formed to support patient care and outcomes. A variety of teams are found in healthcare settings. They can be described as **interprofessional** care, collaborative care, shared care, or team care.

### COMMON TYPES OF HEALTHCARE TEAMS

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**Primary care** is the fundamental level of health services and contacts a patient has with the healthcare system. Primary healthcare teams are composed of healthcare providers who provide comprehensive healthcare within the community. As an example, a primary team could consist of a group of family physicians, nurse practitioners, practice managers, pharmacists, and healthcare administrators (HCAs) working to support the team. Primary care teams work to meet public and patient expectations, optimize health outcomes, and work to support and sustain the healthcare delivery systems.

**Secondary care** is concentrated health services. Secondary healthcare teams are composed of specialized healthcare providers who provide expert and specific care to patients who are often referred to them by a primary healthcare provider or team. Secondary healthcare teams are often found in a hospital setting. As an example, a

patient is referred to a hospital outpatient clinic for care or inpatient emergency care. The team composition can include specialized physicians such as a cardiologist, technicians, nurses, dieticians, and HCAs.

**Tertiary care** is advanced and highly specialized health services. Tertiary healthcare teams are found in healthcare settings focusing on advanced treatments and extended procedures such as cancer treatment or neurosurgery. Patients are referred to tertiary healthcare teams by either the primary or secondary health team. Tertiary team composition typically, includes medical specialists, nurses, technicians, and HCAs.

## COLLABORATION AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

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**Collaboration** described in the context of the healthcare team involves professionals undertaking interdependent roles working together, investing in shared strategies, problem-solving, and decision-making to design care plans supporting patient outcomes. Inherently, effective teams who coordinate care successfully establish methods of communication, inclusive of data management systems, team meetings, and responses to rapidly evolving public health needs.

Interventions to support collaborative team dynamics include:

- remove the reliance on continuing the way things have always been done, try new approaches
- encourage change, look for opportunities to find solutions, and improve processes
- support transparency in all interactions
- recognize and celebrate collaboration within the team

## JUDGMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

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Many thinking strategies are needed in a healthcare setting to ensure quality patient outcomes and accountability. Healthcare team members typically utilize and apply knowledge based on their scope of practice and role. Clinical reasoning is a process undertaken by healthcare professionals to understand a patient's problem, analyze information, and implement interventions. Healthcare decision-making is also a process inclusive of definable steps in sequential order.

## TECHNOLOGY AND THE IMPACT ON HEALTHCARE TEAM COMMUNICATION

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Technology has enhanced the accessibility of team communication in healthcare settings with the ability to communicate through the variety of devices and channels available. Connected healthcare spaces enable more agile treatment plans to develop within the team. Healthcare innovation allows the sharing and analyzing of patient data with team members to support decision-making capabilities. Technology can strengthen therapeutic communication via team relationships when used in a consistent manner to update team members and share information practices.

## NAVIGATING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS AND WORKPLACE CONFLICT

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An integral part of being a member of the healthcare team involves navigating challenging or difficult conversations. These conversations may arise based on a number of contributing factors such as stress, fatigue, time of day, and a patient who is in pain, angry, or appears aggressive. We should attempt to approach these

situations in a non-judgmental manner and avoid labeling someone as hostile or unpleasant. Practicing therapeutic communication techniques can help to de-escalate encounters.

## DIVERSITY AND THE HEALTHCARE TEAM

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Diversity in care teams involves members from multiple races, ages, genders, ethnicities, and orientations who present with various backgrounds and experiences. In 2019, around seven million people worked at general medical, surgical, or specialty hospitals; some two million at outpatient care centers, and about 1.8 million worked at nursing care facilities. There were 9.8 million workers employed as healthcare technicians and practitioners, including physicians, surgeons, and registered nurses. About two-thirds were non-Hispanic White. Another 5.3 million worked as nursing assistants, home health and personal care aides, and in other healthcare support occupations. One-quarter of healthcare support workers were Black. Women accounted for three-quarters of full-time, year-round healthcare workers (Laughlin et al., 2023). Healthcare teams composed of diverse members often have a wide range of decision-making and critical thinking abilities as they relate to healthcare decisions leading to more positive outcomes.

## HEALTH LITERACY

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### What is Health Literacy?

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The definition of health literacy was updated in August 2020 with the release of the U.S. government's [Healthy People 2030](#) initiative. The update addresses personal health literacy and organizational health literacy and provides the following definitions:

- **Personal health literacy** is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- **Organizational health literacy** is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

These definitions are a change from the health literacy definition used in Healthy People 2010 and Healthy People 2020: “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”

The new definitions:

- Emphasize people’s ability to use health information rather than just understand it
- Focus on the ability to make “well-informed” decisions rather than “appropriate” ones
- Acknowledge that organizations have a responsibility to address health literacy
- Incorporate a public health perspective

## Why is Health Literacy Important?

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Media 7.1. [Dr. Rima Rudd](#) [Online video]. Copyright 2015 by [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

## Understanding Health Literacy

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Health literacy is important for everyone because, at some point in our lives, we all need to be able to find, understand, and use health information and services.

Taking care of our health is part of everyday life, not just when we visit a doctor, clinic, or hospital. Health literacy can help us prevent health problems, protect our health, and better manage health problems when they arise.

Even people who read well and are comfortable using numbers can face health literacy issues when:

- They aren't familiar with medical terms or how their bodies work.
- They have to interpret statistics and evaluate risks and benefits that affect their health and safety.
- They are diagnosed with a serious illness and are scared and confused.
- They have health conditions that require complicated self-care.
- They are voting on an issue affecting the community's health and relying on unfamiliar technical information.

## Why Do We Have a Health Literacy Problem?

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When organizations or people create and give others health information that is too difficult for them to understand, we create a health literacy problem. When we expect them to figure out health services with many unfamiliar, confusing, or even conflicting steps, we also create a health literacy problem.

## How Can Healthcare Professionals Help People Now?

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We can help people use the health literacy skills they have. How? We can do the following:

- Create and provide information and services people can understand and use most effectively with the skills they have. See [Develop and Test Materials](#).
- Work with educators and others to help people become more familiar with health information and services and build their health literacy skills over time. See [Collaborate](#).
- Build our own skills as communicators of health information. See [Find Training](#) for free, online options.
- Work with trusted messengers to share your information.

- Build health-literate organizations. See the following:
  - [Attributes of a Health Literate Organization](#)
  - [Assess Health Literacy in Your Organization](#)
  - [Organizational Health Literacy: Quality Improvement Measures with Expert Consensus](#)
- Consider the [cultural and linguistic norms](#), environment, and history of your intended audience when developing your information and messages.
- Use [certified translators and interpreters](#) who can adapt to your intended audience's language preferences, communication expectations, and health literacy skills.

### Talking Points About Health Literacy

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As a health literacy ambassador, it's up to you to make sure your colleagues, staff, senior leadership, and community leaders understand the importance of using health literacy concepts. Use these talking points when making the case for building a health-literate organization. Add talking points relevant to your organization.

- Nearly nine out of 10 adults struggle to understand and use personal and public health information when it's filled with unfamiliar or complex terms.
- Limited health literacy costs the healthcare system money and results in higher than necessary morbidity and mortality. [Improving health literacy](#) could prevent nearly 1 million hospital visits and save over \$25 billion a year.
- We can improve health literacy if we practice clear communication strategies and techniques. Clear communication means presenting familiar concepts, words, numbers, and images in ways that make sense to the people who need the information.
- Testing information products with your intended audience and asking for feedback are the best ways to know if you're communicating clearly. Test and ask for feedback before releasing information to the public.
- Clear communication builds trust with your audience. When your audience trusts you, they're more likely to follow your recommendations.
- Choosing to use jargon is an act of exclusion. Using clear communication leads to better access in healthcare.
- Clear communication streamlines the translation process. That means you can more quickly share your information with people who are non-native English speakers and readers.

## COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

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### Defining Therapeutic Communication

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Therapeutic, by its very definition, relates to curative treatments that benefit both the mind and the body (Merriam-Webster. n.d.). Effective therapeutic communication requires people to be compassionate. This may seem to be innate in people but that is not always true. In healthcare settings, effective **therapeutic communication** is used to care for people so that their healthcare needs can be met. Effective therapeutic communication skills can be learned through continuous self-reflection, empathy development, and practice.

## Empathy

**Empathy** is helpful when therapeutically communicating with others because you feel what they are experiencing with the person, and that shared feeling leads to connection and trust with the patient. Empathy is an awareness of how someone is experiencing or feeling an emotional event because you have felt the same or similar emotion. For example, a patient shares with the healthcare provider that they are extremely sad after the death of their beloved cat Snips. The healthcare provider remembers the sadness she felt when her rabbit Hopper died and expresses to the patient, “This is a difficult time as pets are like family.” The patient then responds, “Yes, I was closer to Snips than I am to some of my family”. The healthcare provider responds with a caring glance and thanks the patient for sharing.



Image 7.2. Healthcare professionals use therapeutic communication to care for others. [\[Image description\]](#).



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Media 7.2. [Empathy: The Human Connection to Patient Care](#) [Online video]. Copyright 2013 by [Cleveland Clinic](#).

## Sympathy

**Sympathy** is not considered helpful when therapeutically connecting with another person because the sympathetic person feels sorry for the other person and can only imagine how they might be feeling. Often, when sympathizing with someone, people try to solve the person’s problem to assist them in moving outside of their emotional state. For example, a patient shares with the healthcare provider that they are sad that they will have to quit their job to look after their mother who is in the early stages of dementia. The healthcare provider feels terrible that the patient’s mother is suffering from dementia and that the patient must now lose income to look after their mother. The healthcare provider responds by suggesting that the patient looks into some inexpensive adult daycare centers. The patient does not respond and leaves the encounter feeling confused because she interprets the healthcare provider’s response to mean that the healthcare provider doesn’t think that the patient can look after their own mother. The healthcare provider doesn’t understand how difficult it will be to have strangers care for their mother.

## Governing Principles for Communicating with Patients with Limitations

An impairment may be new or temporary, such as an injury, surgery, or drug impairment. When the impairment is new, try different methods to address the patient’s needs. For example, if the person requires assistance in communication, treat them as you would any other person requiring assistance. The first principle is to ask the patient how to best communicate with them. Then listen to their response. The patient is the expert on their needs

and what works for them. Do not insist that your way is the correct way; they have lived with their limitations daily (Harrington et al., 2020).

If a person asks for assistance, clarify how to help and what to do. For example, do they want you to take their arm? Ensure that you speak clearly and wait for responses and cues as to how they wish to proceed. Do not touch anything without asking first. For example, service animals or wheelchairs. A person's assistive device (e.g. wheelchair, cane, walker) is considered a part of their personal space. Acknowledge the presence of an interpreter, attendant, or companion, but remember to address the person with a disability directly.

## ELECTRONIC AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

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Social media started as a means of enhancing people's social lives, but it exceeded that purpose a long time ago. Virtually every business, healthcare service, and non-governmental organization has some sort of internet presence. These organizations use social media channels to communicate their brand or their values to the outside world. Even those few organizations that don't run their own Twitter or Instagram account are sure to appear on other people's review accounts or websites. Of course, our reliance on electronic communication doesn't end there. Other channels of electronic communication—most notably email—are day-to-day facts of school, work, and personal life. This doesn't mean that we can afford to take electronic communication for granted. Even the smallest text deserves the same kind of communication consideration that we give more formal, traditional kinds of writing and speaking.



*Image 7.3. It is important for healthcare professionals to understand how best to use various types of electronic communication. [Image description].*

### Email

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Most students are familiar with email, or as it was once known, electronic mail. Email is the most popular form of written communication in the history of human civilization. It is extremely flexible in what it can do. It can be used to send short routine messages or lengthy formal messages. It can be used to deliver other kinds of documents, such as letters, reports, and memos, and it can be used to facilitate the scheduling of face-to-face meetings and events. Email is also flexible in how it can be accessed: computers, tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, and other digital devices all allow you to send and receive messages. It is without question the most versatile communication channel in the workplace.

Because email is such a flexible and accessible technology, we must be mindful in how we use it. Professional emails should not look or sound like the texts we send our friends and family. As with more traditional forms of correspondence, our emails will be held to high standards for their vocabulary, organization, and appearance.

When a professional email is properly written, it gives the author credibility. The audience receiving it will be more likely to trust the information in the message and the person who sent it. When an email is overly casual or is filled with grammar mistakes, however, it distracts from the content of the message. It decreases the recipient's respect

for the person who wrote it and jeopardizes the integrity of the organization that the author represents. A well-written email makes a strong impression. A poorly written one could cost you a job, a contract, or your reputation.

Before hitting the Send button, put yourself in your reader's position and assess whether you've achieved the purpose you set out to achieve in the first place. Evaluate also if you've struck the appropriate tone and formality. If you're aware that your tone is too angry, for instance, cool down by focusing on other business for a while. After revising generally, always proofread an email. In any professional situation, but especially in important ones related to gaining and keeping employment, any typo or error related to spelling, grammar, or punctuation can cost you dearly. A poorly written email can come across as insulting because it effectively says to the recipient: "You weren't important enough for me to take the time to ensure that this email was properly written." Worse, poor writing can cause miscommunication if it places the burden of interpretation on the reader to figure out what the writer meant to say if that's not clear. If the recipient acts on misinterpretations, and others base their actions on that action, you can soon find that even small errors can have damaging ripple effects that infuriate everyone involved.

## Netiquette and Social Media

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*Image 7.4. Professionalism applies just as much to social media as it does to face-to-face interactions. [Image description].*

We create and curate personal profiles, post content and comments, and interact via social media as a regular part of both our personal and professional lives. How we conduct ourselves on the open internet can leave a lasting impression, one not so easily undone if it's regrettable. The hilarious but compromising selfie you posted on Instagram five years ago is still there for your potential employer to find, judge for what it says about your professionalism, and speculate about what customers might think if they saw it too. That sarcastic reply to a public post on Facebook or Twitter in a heated moment a decade ago can come back to haunt you. We're all learning as we go in this new media environment, but any mistakes we make along the way, no matter how much we've matured since, are still there for all to see and can have lasting impacts on our careers.

## Legal Responsibilities

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Your writing says something powerful about your personal credibility. It also says something about the credibility of any organization with which you're affiliated. At work, what you write and how you write can be part of your company's success, but it can also expose it to unintended consequences and legal responsibility. When you write, keep in mind that your words will keep on existing long after you have moved on to other projects. They can become an issue if they exaggerate, state false claims, or defame a person or legal entity such as a competing company. Another issue is plagiarism, or using someone else's ideas or writing without giving credit to the source. Whether the material is taken from a printed book, a website, or a blog, plagiarism is a violation of copyright law and may also violate your school's or your company's policies. Industry standards often have legal aspects that must be respected and cannot be ignored.

## Using Social Media Professionally

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Review sites, blogs, tweets, and online community forums are some of the continually developing means of social media being harnessed by business and industry to reach customers and other stakeholders. People's comfort in the online environment forces businesses to market and interact in this environment or risk a massive loss in sales and interest. Though most users learn how to use social media as an extension or facilitator of their social lives, using the same platforms for professional reasons requires some change in behavior.

Recognize that every modern business or organization should have a social media presence on the sites they expect their customer base to frequent, especially popular sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Messaging here must be consistent across the platforms when alerting the customer base of important information such as special events, deals, and other news.

Next, follow expert advice on how to properly take advantage of social media in detail to promote your operation and reach people. Large companies will dedicate personnel to running their social media presence, but small businesses can do much of it themselves if they follow some decent online advice. Also, know that social media is a constantly evolving environment. Stay on trend by continually searching out and implementing the latest advice similar to the above.

Finally, always consider how the sites you access and what you post represent you and your employer, even if you think others don't know where you work or who you are. Internet service providers (ISPs) are required by law to archive information concerning the use and traffic of information that can become available under subpoena. Any move you make leaves digital footprints, so you will have to answer for any misstep that brings shame upon you or your company.

## NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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**Non-verbal communication strategies** are ways you communicate without speaking, for example through facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, and body language.

In many situations, much of your communication occurs through non-verbal behaviors. Non-verbal communication can be a useful strategy for communicating emotions like empathy, compassion, and acceptance. It is often how healthcare providers respond, rather than what they say, that leaves a lasting impression on patients, so it is important to be aware of how you communicate using non-verbal behaviors.

Non-verbal behaviors must align with your verbal behaviors so that patients clearly understand what you are saying. For example, it would be confusing for the patient if you had a somber tone of voice, a distancing posture, and avoided eye contact while attempting to maintain a therapeutic relationship with the patient.

Try to ensure positioning where you are eye-to-eye with the patient and at a slight angle toward one another. This positioning conveys an open and non-confrontational and non-authoritative space. Whenever possible, avoid standing over the patient if they are sitting or lying in bed. It is better to sit down, which also conveys that you have time to listen to them.

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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### CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Therapeutic communication with patients and families requires attention to a person's culture. It is important to note that:

- People are cultural beings. At a basic level, culture includes a person's beliefs and values. It refers to a person's practices or their way of life. It includes a person's ethnicity, spirituality, and religion, but it is much more than these components.
- Culture is deeply embedded in each person and everything they do, including how they communicate and what is meaningful to them. It is essential to understand because it shapes the way we think, feel, and behave. It can determine what is considered taboo, appropriate, and meaningful.

Cultural safety is an important component of therapeutic communication because culture is so dynamic and deeply embedded in a person's way of being. In the context of therapeutic communication, cultural differences can affect the ways you communicate with patients. Cultural awareness is vital to providing safe care to patients (Curtis et al., 2019).

A relational approach can facilitate communication that embraces cultural safety because it relies on your dialogical engagement with the patient. In other words, healthcare providers should suspend what they assume they know about culture, and let patients direct healthcare providers with regard to how culture is meaningful to them. This approach encourages you to consider the relational interplay (Doane & Varcoe, 2015) of communication, the patient's culture, and your own culture. Like everyone, healthcare providers are cultural beings – you will tend to view the world and your patient from your own cultural perspective. From a relational perspective, you must understand your own culture and your patient's culture so that you are positioned to recognize and understand the patient's culture. Part of a relational approach also involves positioning yourself as an inquirer who is in a "space of knowing/not knowing, being curious, looking for what seems significant" (Doane & Varcoe, 2015, p. 6). See [Table 7.1](#) on how to develop yourself as an inquirer and understand the interplay of your culture and the patient's culture.



*Image 7.5. Cultural safety is integral to therapeutic communication. [\[Image description\]](#).*

**Table 7.1: Understanding Culture**

<b>Your Own Culture</b>	<b>The Patient's Culture</b>
How do you define your culture?	Tell me about your culture.
How does your culture affect your health and illness?	Tell me about a typical day for you.
What are your own beliefs and customs that may affect how you care for and communicate with the patient?	Tell me about what is important to know about your culture in order to care for you best.
If you were in the patient's shoes, what would be important for you to share with your healthcare provider about your culture so that they could better care for you?	How can I provide care to you that is culturally safe?

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

We may be tempted to think of intercultural communication as the interaction between two people from different countries. While two distinct national passports communicate a key part of our identity non-verbally, what happens when two people from two different parts of the same country communicate? Indeed, intercultural communication happens between subgroups of the same country. Whether it be the distinctions between dialects in the same language or the rural-versus-urban dynamic, our geographic, linguistic, educational, sociological, and psychological traits influence our communication.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and we cannot separate ourselves from it, even as we leave home and begin to define ourselves in new ways through work and achievements. **Culture** consists of the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions of a group of people who learn from one another and teach others that their behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives are the correct ways to think, act, and feel. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a corporation. We can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group, there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behavior and interaction.

More than just the clothes we wear, the movies we watch, or the video games we play, all representations of our environment are part of our culture. Culture also involves the psychological aspects and behaviors that are expected of members of our group. From the choice of words (message), to how we communicate (in person or by email), to how we acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (non-verbal feedback), to internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

## Key Takeaways

- Communication among members of a healthcare team is essential for quality patient care and effective team performance.
- When using any form of electronic communication, take extra time to consider the clarity of your message since it will lack non-verbal cues.
- As healthcare professionals, we must understand our own culture so that we are positioned to recognize and understand the patient's culture.

## Vocabulary

- **Collaboration** – Involves professionals undertaking interdependent roles working together
- **Empathy** – Feeling what another person is experiencing with that person, and that shared feeling leads to connection and trust with the patient
- **Healthcare Team** – A group of professionals contributing to the care and treatment of a patient
- **Non-Verbal Communication Strategies** – Communicating without speaking; for example through facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, and body language
- **Organizational Health Literacy** – The degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others
- **Personal Health Literacy** – The degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others
- **Primary Care** – The fundamental level of health services and contacts a patient has with the healthcare system
- **Secondary Care** – Concentrated health services, composed of specialized healthcare providers who provide expert and specific care to patients
- **Sympathy** – Feeling sorry for another person and only being able to imagine how they might be feeling
- **Tertiary Care** – Advanced and highly specialized health service, found in healthcare settings focusing on advanced treatments and extended procedures

## CHAPTER 7 TEST YOURSELF

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Please see Appendix C for an offline copy of the [Chapter 7 Test Yourself](#) activity. To view interactive H5P elements that have been excluded from this version of the text, please visit it online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=49#h5p-28>

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### Health Literacy

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### Communication with Patients and Families

#### *Defining Therapeutic Communication*

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## Intercultural Communication

### *Cultural Considerations*

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### *Intercultural Communication*

“[Intercultural Communication](#)” in *Introduction to Communication in Nursing* by Jennifer Lapum, Oona St-Amant, Michelle Hughes, and Joy Garmaise-Yee. Published by Toronto Metropolitan University Pressbooks under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license. Edited for brevity, flow, consistency with its new context, and to change to American spelling conventions.

## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

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**Image 7.5:** An image depicting several hands arranged around a globe as if the world was being cradled. [\[Return to Image 7.5.\]](#)



## Chapter 8: Life Management

### Learning Objectives

- Examine the importance of a healthy lifestyle for healthcare professionals.
- Distinguish common causes of stress and evaluate techniques for mitigating burnout.
- Evaluate time management and organizational strategies for success in school and future professions.

### INTRODUCTION

**Wellness** is being in good physical and mental health. Because mental health and physical health are linked, problems in one area can impact the other. At the same time, improving a person's physical health can also benefit their mental health, and vice versa. It is important to make healthy choices for both physical and mental well-being. Remember that wellness is not just the absence of illness or stress. A person can still strive for wellness even if they are experiencing these challenges in their life.

#### Chapter Resources

[Key Takeaways](#)

[Vocabulary](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

### STRESS MANAGEMENT

#### HEALTH EFFECTS OF STRESS

**Stress** is a feeling a person gets when faced with a challenge. In small doses, stress can be good for a person because it makes them more alert and gives them a burst of energy. For instance, if a person starts to cross the street and sees a car about to run them over, that jolt they feel helps them to jump out of the way before they get hit. But feeling stressed for a long time can take a toll on a person's mental and physical health. Even though it may seem hard to find ways to de-stress with all the things they have to do, it's important to find those ways; their health depends on it.

## What are the most common causes of stress?

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Stress happens when people feel like they don't have the tools to manage all of the demands in their lives. Stress can be short-term or long-term. Missing the bus or arguing with your spouse or partner can cause short-term stress. Money problems or trouble at work can cause long-term stress. Even happy events, like having a baby or getting married can cause stress. Some of the most common stressful life events include:

- Death of a spouse
- Death of a close family member
- Divorce
- Losing your job
- Major personal illness or injury
- Marital separation
- Marriage
- Pregnancy
- Retirement
- Spending time in jail



*Image 8.1. Stress can have a powerful effect on a person's well-being. [\[Image description\]](#).*

## What are some common signs of stress?

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Everyone responds to stress a little differently. Everyone's symptoms may be different. Here are some of the signs to look for:

- Not eating or eating too much
- Feeling like you have no control
- Needing to have too much control
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Lack of energy
- Lack of focus
- Trouble getting things done
- Poor self-esteem
- Short temper
- Trouble sleeping
- Upset stomach
- Back pain

- General aches and pains

These symptoms may also be signs of depression or anxiety, which can be caused by long-term stress.

### Can stress affect health?

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The body responds to stress by releasing stress hormones. These hormones make blood pressure, heart rate, and blood sugar levels go up. Long-term stress can help cause a variety of health problems, including:

- Mental health disorders, like depression and anxiety
- Obesity
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal heart beats
- Menstrual problems
- Acne and other skin problems

### How can a person help handle their stress?

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Everyone has to deal with stress. There are steps a person can take to help them handle stress in a positive way and keep it from making them sick. Try these tips to keep stress in check:

#### **Develop a new attitude**

- Become a problem solver. Make a list of the things that cause you stress. From your list, figure out which problems you can solve now and which are beyond your control for the moment. From your list of problems that you can solve now, start with the little ones. Learn how to calmly look at a problem, think of possible solutions, and take action to solve the problem. Being able to solve small problems will give you the confidence to tackle the big ones. And feeling confident that you can solve problems will go a long way to helping you feel less stressed.
- Be flexible. Sometimes, it's not worth the stress to argue. Give in once in a while or meet people halfway.
- Get organized. Think ahead about how you're going to spend your time. Write a to-do list. Figure out what's most important to do and do those things first.
- Set limits. When it comes to things like work and family, figure out what you can really do. There are only so many hours in the day. Set limits for yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say "no" to requests for your time and energy.

#### **Relax**

- Take deep breaths. If you're feeling stressed, taking a few deep breaths makes you breathe slower and helps your muscles relax.
- Stretch. Stretching can also help relax your muscles and make you feel less tense.
- Massage tense muscles. Having someone massage the muscles in the back of your neck and upper back can help you feel less tense.

- Take time to do something you want to do. We all have lots of things that we have to do. But often we don't take the time to do the things that we really want to do. It could be listening to music, reading a good book, or going to a movie.

### Take care of your body

- Get enough sleep. Getting enough sleep helps you recover from the stresses of the day. Also, being well-rested helps you think better so that you are prepared to handle problems as they come up. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night to feel rested.
- Eat right. Try to fuel up with fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. Don't be fooled by the jolt you get from caffeine or high-sugar snack foods. Your energy will wear off, and you could wind up feeling more tired than you did before.
- Get moving. Getting physical activity can not only help relax your tense muscles but improve your mood. Research shows that physical activity can help relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Don't deal with stress in unhealthy ways. This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking, or overeating.

### Connect with others

- Share your stress. Talking about your problems with friends or family members can sometimes help you feel better. They might also help you see your problems in a new way and suggest solutions that you hadn't thought of.
- Get help from a professional if you need it. If you feel that you can no longer cope, talk to your doctor. She or he may suggest counseling to help you learn better ways to deal with stress.
- Help others. Volunteering in your community can help you make new friends and feel better about yourself.

## PERSONAL WELLNESS

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**Personal wellness** means being physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy. A healthy lifestyle helps balance all these aspects to achieve wellness. A person's decisions and choices will impact both their short-term and long-term wellness. It is important to take into account your overall personal wellness in order to increase the potential for academic success in your educational program and get the greatest benefit out of it. In this section, you will learn about some of the various aspects affecting your wellness, such as nutrition, fitness, and lifestyle choices.



*Image 8.2. Personal wellness is an important component of academic potential. [Image description].*

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

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There are many lifestyle choices that we make that impact our personal wellness in both negative and positive ways. The negative choices can become vices and cause addictions that can impede wellness for a few hours or be lifelong challenges. Positive choices can promote health and help form healthy habits. Some of the most rudimentary lifestyle choices are choosing to nurture and protect your body.

- Get enough sleep every night and try to be consistent about your sleeping routine. Studies show this helps your brain function more effectively.
- Keep hydrated. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid soda, alcohol, and sugary drinks.
- Eat a balanced, nutritious diet. Good nutritious food and a well-balanced diet will fuel your body. Avoid junk food and processed food.
- Exercise regularly and stay fit.
- Keep alcohol intake reasonable. Over-consumption of alcohol reduces the ability to function efficiently or think clearly.
- Do not smoke. Smoking can cause lung cancer, emphysema, chronic cough, shortness of breath, and dull skin.
- Follow safety rules. Buckle up. Wear your helmet. Use ladders carefully. Wear safety goggles, gloves, and other protective equipment when required. These choices will help prevent unnecessary accidents that can have serious long-term effects.
- Spend time outdoors and get fresh air and sunshine. Fresh air and sunshine help give the body vitality and vitamin D, which provides numerous benefits.
- Stay active. Keep moving. Go for walks. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Ride your bike.
- Stay home when you are sick. Rest. It allows your body to fight and recover from illness and keeps others safe.

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH

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As well as looking after your physical health, it's also important to look after your emotional health. **Emotional health** keeps your heart in check and helps you to keep your emotions reasonable. Here are some ways to stay emotionally healthy.

- Don't hold onto grudges.
- Do things that bring you peace. Maybe that's going for a nature walk or a hike in the forest.
- Visit family and friends. Get together with people you care about.
- Join a team. You can meet new people while you learn a new skill and keep active.
- Have some downtime. Sometimes it just feels good to let things go and watch a good movie. Rest, relax, cry, laugh, and enjoy.
- Be aware of your feelings and attitudes.
- Develop your self-esteem. Pursue things that matter to you.

## TIME MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS TECHNIQUES

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A great aspect of time is its equality. Regardless of race, religion, or age, everyone has the same amount of time in a day, week, month, and year. Wealthy people cannot buy more time and poor people do not receive less time. A minute for a tall person is the same amount of time for a short person. An hour for a woman is the same amount of time for a man. Regardless of how many languages someone speaks, ethnicity, educational background, income, or experience, everyone has 365 days in a year. Granted some people will live longer than others, but everyone has the same amount of time every day as everyone else. Time is also how we keep track of meetings and schedules ensuring that we are where we are supposed to be at the time we are expected to be there (work, home, class, meeting friends and family, et cetera). Time is important to us.



*Image 8.3. There are many strategies a person can use to make the most of their time. [\[Image description\]](#).*

### TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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The following are some strategies you can begin using immediately to make the most of your time:

- Prepare to be successful. When planning ahead for studying, think yourself into the right mood. Focus on the positive. “When I get these chapters read tonight, I’ll be ahead in studying for the next test, and I’ll also have plenty of time tomorrow to do X.” Visualize yourself studying well!
- Use your best—and most appropriate—time of day. Different tasks require different mental skills. For some kinds of studying, you may be able to start first thing in the morning as you wake, while others need your most alert moments at another time – whatever those times are for you.
- Break up large projects into small pieces. Whether it is writing a paper for class, studying for a final exam, or reading a long assignment or full book, students often feel daunted at the beginning of a large project. It is easier to get going if you break it up into stages that you schedule at separate times—and then begin with the first section that requires only an hour or two.
- Do the most important studying first. When two or more things require your attention, do the more crucial one first. If something happens and you can’t complete everything, you’ll suffer less if the most crucial work is done.
- If you have trouble getting started, do an easier task first. Like large tasks, complex or difficult ones can be daunting. If you can’t get going, switch to an easier task you can accomplish quickly. That will give you momentum, and often you feel more confident tackling the difficult task after being successful in the first one.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed and stressed because you have too much to do, revisit your time planner. Sometimes it is hard to get started if you keep thinking about other things you need to get done. Review your schedule for the next few days and make sure everything important is scheduled, then relax and concentrate on the task at hand.
- If you are really floundering, talk to someone. Maybe you just don’t understand what you should be doing. Talk with your instructor or another student in the class to get back on track.

- Take a break. We all need breaks to help us concentrate without becoming fatigued and burned out. As a general rule, a short break every hour or so is effective in helping recharge your study energy. Get up and move around to get your blood flowing, clear your thoughts, and work off stress.
- Use unscheduled times to work ahead. You have scheduled that hundred pages of reading for later today, but you have the textbook with you as you're waiting for the bus. Start reading now, or flip through the chapter to get a sense of what you will be reading later. Either way, you will save time later. You may be amazed how much studying you can get done during down times throughout the day.
- Keep your momentum. Prevent distractions, such as multi-tasking, that will only slow you down. Check for messages, for example, only at scheduled break times.
- Reward yourself. It's not easy to sit still for hours of studying. When you successfully complete a task, you should feel good and deserve a small reward. A healthy snack, a quick video game session, or social activity can help you feel even better about your successful use of time.
- Just say no. Always tell others nearby when you're studying, to reduce the chances of being interrupted. Still, interruptions happen, and if you are in a situation where you are frequently interrupted by a family member, spouse, roommate, or friend, it helps to have your "no" prepared in advance: "No, I really have to be ready for this test" or "That's a great idea, but let's do it tomorrow—I just can't today." You shouldn't feel bad about saying no—especially if you told that person in advance that you needed to study.
- Have a life. Never schedule your day or week so full of work and study that you have no time at all for yourself, your family and friends, and your larger life.
- Take inventory. Pay attention to where your time goes. What do you spend your time doing? What things could be cut out in order to make space for studies?
- Use a calendar planner and daily to-do list.
- Use technology to your advantage. Software and apps are available to help with organization and productivity. They can save you a lot of time.

## BATTLING PROCRASTINATION

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**Procrastination** is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. This can happen to anyone at any time. It's like a voice inside your head keeps coming up with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other than studying: "I really ought to get this room cleaned up before I study" or "I can study anytime, but tonight's the only chance I have to do X." That voice is also very good at rationalizing: "I really don't need to read that chapter now; I'll have plenty of time tomorrow at lunch...."

Procrastination is very powerful. Some people battle it daily, others only occasionally. Most students procrastinate often, and about half say they need help avoiding procrastination. Procrastination can threaten one's ability to do well on an assignment or test.

People procrastinate for different reasons. Some people are too relaxed in their priorities, seldom worry, and easily put off responsibilities. Others worry constantly, and that stress keeps them from focusing on the task at hand. Some procrastinate because they fear failure; others procrastinate because they fear success or are so perfectionistic that they don't want to let themselves down. Some are dreamers. Many different factors are involved, and there are different styles of procrastinating.

Just as there are different causes, there are different possible solutions for procrastination. Different strategies

work for different people. The time management strategies described earlier can help you avoid procrastination. Because this is a psychological issue, some additional psychological strategies can also help:

- Since procrastination is usually a habit, accept that and work on breaking it as you would any other bad habit- one day at a time. Know that every time you overcome feelings of procrastination, the habit becomes weaker and eventually you'll have a new habit of being able to start studying right away.
- Schedule times for studying using a daily or weekly planner, paper or digital. Carry it with you and look at it often. Just being aware of the time and what you need to do today can help you get organized and stay on track.
- If you keep thinking of something else you might forget to do later (making you feel like you “must” do it now), write yourself a note about it for later and get it out of your mind.
- Counter a negative with a positive. If you're procrastinating because you're not looking forward to a certain task, try to think of the positive future results of doing the work.
- Study with a motivated friend. Form a study group with other students who are motivated and won't procrastinate along with you. You'll learn good habits from them while getting the work done now.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=53#oembed-1>

Media 8.1. [Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator](#) [Online video]. Copyright 2016 by [TED](#).

## STUDY SKILLS

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What does it mean to earn an A versus a C or a D in a class? For many students, this letter grade signifies the difference between success and failure. However, grades are dependent on many factors. The difficulty of the material and whether or not a topic is new to you might influence how well you are able to remember the information and recall it on an assessment. The types of assessments that are given in a class (tests, quizzes, papers, ungraded homework) might also play a role in how you are able to demonstrate proficiency in your subject. The section below provides a few tips on how to make the most out of every class and how to increase your chances of getting the grade you want.

### Take Notes When You Are Reading

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It is helpful to take notes by hand or electronically while you are reading to retain information. This is sometimes called “active reading” and the goal is to stay focused on the material and to be able to refer back to notes made while reading to improve retention and study efficiency. Don't make the mistake of expecting to remember everything you are reading. Taking notes when reading requires effort and energy. Be willing to do it and you'll reap the benefits later when studying for a test or writing a paper.

## Place Your Assignments on Your Master Calendar and Create Plans for Completing Them Before They Are Due

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Place all of your assignments for all of your classes with their due dates in your calendar, planner, smartphone, or whatever you use for organization. Students can block off all classes, studying, commute time, work hours, sleeping, eating, caretaking, and socializing. Using a weekly and monthly schedule, you can schedule when to start those assignments, break an assignment into smaller steps, and have an idea of how long it will take to complete them.

## Have Someone Read Your Papers Before You Submit Them

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You might be surprised to learn how many students turn in papers with spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors that could have been easily corrected by using a spell checker program or having someone read your paper. Campus writing centers or tutors will read your paper and give feedback, make suggestions, and help shape ideas. Take advantage of these services if they are offered. Another strategy is to read your paper aloud to yourself. You may catch errors when you read aloud that you might not catch when reading your writing. Remember that it is always the student's responsibility to have papers proofread, not someone else's. Writing early drafts gives you time to edit.

## Schedule a time to study and in a location that is best for you

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It's easy to put off studying if it's not something we schedule. Block specific times and days for studying. Put the times on your calendar. Stick to the schedule. Some students study best in the morning and some at night. Some excel at a coffee shop, and others at the library. The place and time in which students often study is usually the most convenient for them. Students often find convenient places and times may also be full of distractions and thus are not good choices for them to study. Find several places to study and change up your space if you find that it is no longer a working space for you. It's worth the effort to study at the time and place that will be most productive for you. For most students, it is best to turn off the cell phone and TV and to keep off the Internet (and social media) unless it directly relates to your work. For some, some background noise helps to concentrate.

## MEMORY TECHNIQUES

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The first thing our brains do is to take in information from our senses (what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell). In many classroom and homework settings, we primarily use hearing for lectures and seeing for reading textbooks. Information we perceive from our senses is stored in what we call the short-term memory.

It is useful to then be able to do multiple things with information in the short-term memory. We want to: 1) decide if that information is important; 2) for the information that is important, be able to save the information in our brain on a longer-term basis—this storage is called the long-term memory; 3) retrieve that information when we need to. Exams often measure how effectively the student can retrieve “important information.”

In some classes and with some textbooks it is easy to determine information important to memorize. In other courses with other textbooks, that process may be more difficult. Your instructor can be a valuable resource to assist with determining the information that needs to be memorized. Once the important information is identified, it is helpful to organize it in a way that will help you best understand.

## Moving Information from the Short-term Memory to the Long-term Memory

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This is something that takes a lot of time; there is no shortcut to it. Students who skip putting in the time and work often end up cramming at the end.

Once information is memorized, regardless of when the exam is, the last step is to apply the information. Ask yourself: In what real-world scenarios could you apply this information? For mastery, try to teach the information to someone else.

How we save information to our long-term memory has a lot to do with our ability to retrieve it when we need it at a later date. Our mind “saves” information by creating a complex series of links to the data. The stronger the links, the easier it is to recall. You can strengthen these links by using the following strategies. You should note how closely they are tied to good listening and note-taking strategies.

- Make a deliberate decision to remember the specific data. “I need to remember Richard’s name” creates stronger links than just wishing you had a better memory for names.
- Link the information to your everyday life. Ask yourself, “Why is it important that I remember this material?”—and answer it.
- Link the information to other information you already have “stored”, especially the key themes of the course, and you will recall the data more easily. Ask yourself how this is related to other information you have. Look for ways to tie items together. Are they used in similar ways? Do they have similar meanings? Do they sound alike?
- Mentally group similar individual items into “buckets.” By doing this, you are creating links. For example, if you must memorize a vocabulary list for a Spanish class, group the nouns together with other nouns, verbs with verbs, and so forth. Or your groupings might be sentences using the vocabulary words.
- Use visual imagery. Picture the concept vividly in your mind. Make those images big, bold, and colorful—even silly! Pile concepts on top of each other or around each other; exaggerate their features like a caricature and let your imagination run wild. Humor and crazy imagery can help you recall key concepts.
- Use the information. Studies have generally shown that we retain only 5 percent of what we hear, 10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we learn from multimedia, and 30 percent of what is demonstrated to us. However we retain 50 percent of what we discuss, 75 percent of what we practice by doing, and 90 percent of what we teach others or use immediately in a relevant activity. Review your notes, participate in class, and study with others.
- Break information down into manageable “chunks.” Memorizing the ten-digit number “3141592654” seems difficult, but breaking it down into two sets of three digits and one of four digits, like a phone number—(314) 159-2654—now makes it easier to remember.
- Work from general information to the specific. People usually learn best when they get the big picture first, and then look at the details.
- Eliminate distractions. Every time you have to “reboot” your short-term memory, you risk losing data points. Multi-tasking—listening to music or texting while you study—will play havoc with your ability to memorize because you will need to reboot your short-term memory each time you switch mental tasks.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. Hear the information; read the information; say it (yes, out loud), and say it again. The more you use or repeat the information, the stronger you develop links to it. The more

senses you use to process the information, the stronger the memorization. Write information on index cards to make flashcards and use downtime (when waiting for the subway or during a break between classes) to review key information.

- Test your memory often. Try to write down everything you know about a specific subject, from memory. Then go back and check your notes and textbook to see how you did. Practicing retrieval in this way helps ensure long-term learning of facts and concepts.
- Location, location, location. There is often a strong connection between information and the place where you first received that information. Associate information to learning locations for stronger memory links. Picture where you were sitting in the lecture hall as you repeat the facts in your mind.

### Using Mnemonics

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What do the names of the Great Lakes, the makings of a Big Mac, and the number of days in a month have in common? They are easily remembered by using mnemonic devices. **Mnemonics** (pronounced neh-MA-nicks) are tricks for memorizing lists and data. They create artificial but strong links to the data, making recall easier. The most commonly used mnemonic devices are acronyms, acrostics, rhymes, and jingles. Check out the chart below for those and more types of mnemonic devices.

#### Mnemonic Devices

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- **Acronyms**

- Every discipline has its own language and acronyms are abbreviations. Acronyms can be used to remember words in sequence or a group of words representing things or concepts. For example:
  - BOGO: buy one, get one (free)
  - SCUBA: self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.
  - PIN: personal identification number.

- **Acrostics**

- Acrostics are phrases where the first letter of each word represents another word. They are relatively easy to make and can be very useful for remembering groups of words.
  - “My Very Educated Mother Just Sent Us Nine Pizzas” to help remember the nine planets and their order in our solar system.
  - “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally” is an acrostic for the order of operations when solving math problems.

- **Chunking**

- You can capitalize on your short-term memory by “chunking” information. If you need to remember this number: 178206781. The task would exhaust your seven units of storage space unless you “chunk” the digits into groups. In this case, you could divide it into three chunks, like a social insurance number: 178 206 781. By chunking the information and repeating it you can stretch the capacity of your short-term memory.

- **Flashcards**

- Flashcards provide a convenient tool to test yourself frequently. You can purchase flashcards for common memory tasks such as learning multiplication tables, or you can create your own for learning facts, systems, and processes.

- **Images**

- This helps us remember by linking words to meanings through associations based on how a word sounds and creating imagery for specific words. This sort of visualization was found to be more effective when one listened to someone reading a text than when they read the text themselves.

- **Jingle**

- Jingles or short songs are great tools for memory. Remember the famous song to teach children parts of the body, "Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes. Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes. And eyes, and ears, and mouth and nose."

- **Locations and Journeys**

- Traditionally known as the Method of Loci, we associate each word from a list or grouping with a location. Imagine a place with which you are familiar, such as the rooms in your house. These become the objects of information you need to memorize. Another example is to use the route to your work or school, with landmarks along the way becoming the information you need to memorize. When you do this in order of your journey through the imagined space, it makes it easier to retrieve all of the information in the future.

- **Maps and Diagrams**

- Graphic organizers help us remember by connecting new information to our existing knowledge and to let us see how concepts relate to each other and fit into a context. Mind and concept maps, Cause and Effect, Fishbone, Cycle, Flow Chart, Ladders, Story Board, Compare and Contrast, Venn Diagrams, and more.

- **Reciting**

- Saying something out loud activates more areas of our brain and helps to connect the information to other activities.

- **Rhymes**

- Rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and melody make use of our brain's ability to encode audio information and use patterns to aid memory. They help recall by limiting the possible options to those items that fit the pattern you have created.

- **Summarizing**

- This traditional element of note-taking is a way to physically encode materials that make it easier for our brain to store and retrieve. It can be said that if we cannot summarize, then we have not learned...yet.

## CREATING PERSONAL SCHEDULES

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When creating a personal schedule, consider the courses you're taking and your personal time commitments that are non-negotiable, and those that are negotiable. It is important to be realistic about the time required for everything from personal hygiene (bathing, shaving, putting on make-up, doing hair, et cetera) to eating (including meal preparation), to working on courses. As you work on your time management, you will become much more aware of how much time you actually spend on these things.

Be realistic about the amount of time you'll need to devote to your studies. Remember that for every hour spent in class, you should plan an average of two additional hours studying outside of class. Make sure to schedule these time periods in your planner! These times change from week to week, with one course requiring more time in one week because of a paper due at the end of the week and a different course requiring more the next week because of a major exam. Make sure you block out enough hours in the week to accomplish what you need to do. As you choose your study times, consider what times of day you are at your best and what times you prefer to use for social or other activities.

Don't try to micro-manage your schedule. Don't try to estimate exactly how many minutes you'll need two weeks from today to read a given chapter in a given textbook. Instead, just choose the blocks of time you will use for your studies. Don't yet write in the exact study activity—just reserve the block. Next, look at the major deadlines for projects and exams that you wrote earlier. Estimate how much time you may need for each and work backward on the schedule from the due date.

As you put together your schedule, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Be realistic about time when you make your schedule.
- Don't overdo it. Few people can study four or five hours nonstop, and scheduling extended time periods like that may just set you up for failure.
- Schedule social events that occur at set times, but just leave holes in the schedule for other activities. Enjoy those open times and recharge your energy level!
- Try to schedule some time for exercise at least three days a week.
- If a study activity is taking longer than you had scheduled, look ahead and adjust your weekly planner to prevent the stress of feeling behind.
- If you're not paying close attention to everything in your planner, use a colored highlighter to mark the times blocked out for really important things.
- When following your schedule, pay attention to starting and stopping times. If you planned to start your test review at four o'clock after an hour of reading for a different class, don't let the reading run long and take time away from studying for the test.

### Key Takeaways

- Feeling stressed for a long time can take a toll on a person's mental and physical health.
- A person's decisions and choices will impact both their short-term and long-term personal wellness.
- Time management strategies can help a person avoid procrastination.

- **Emotional Health** – What keeps your heart in check and helps you to keep your emotions reasonable
- **Personal Wellness** – Being physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy
- **Procrastination** – A way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now
- **Stress** – A feeling a person gets when faced with a challenge
- **Wellness** – Being in good physical and mental health

## CHAPTER 8 TEST YOURSELF

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Please see Appendix C for an offline copy of the [Chapter 8 Test Yourself](#) activity. To view interactive H5P elements that have been excluded from this version of the text, please visit it online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/healthcarecareerfoundations/?p=53#h5p-27>

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## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

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**Image 8.1:** An image of a person sitting at a table with a notebook and open textbooks. The person appears stressed. [\[Return to Image 8.1\]](#)

**Image 8.2:** A photo of a person lying down in a field of wildflowers. Only their legs are visible. [\[Return to Image 8.2\]](#)

**Image 8.3:** An image depicting time management. An analog clock, a sticky note with the words “time management” written on it, a cup of coffee, and various pens are visible. [\[Return to Image 8.3\]](#)



## Appendix A: Tables

TABLE A1: BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OCCUPATIONS

Table A1: Biotechnology Research and Development Occupations						
Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Bioengineers and Biomedical Engineers</b>	Combine engineering principles with sciences to design and create equipment, devices, computer systems, and software.	Bachelor's	None	\$97,410	10% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Creativity Math skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Medical Scientists</b>	Conduct research aimed at improving overall human health. Often use clinical trials and other investigative methods to reach their findings.	Doctorate or medical degree	Licensure required for some roles	\$95,310	17% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Data-analysis skills Decision-making skills Observation skills

TABLE A2: DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES OCCUPATIONS

Table A2: Diagnostic Services Occupations						
Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians</b>	Create images and conduct tests involving the heart and lungs.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$60,570	5% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Hand-eye coordination Physical stamina Technical skills
<b>Clinical Laboratory Technicians</b>	Collect samples and perform tests to analyze body fluids, tissue, and other substances.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$57,800	7% increase	Ability to use technology Detail-oriented Dexterity Physical stamina
<b>Clinical Laboratory Technologists</b>	Perform more complex tests and laboratory procedures than technicians.	Bachelor's	Varies by state	\$57,800	7% increase	Ability to use technology Detail-oriented Dexterity Physical stamina
<b>Diagnostic Medical Sonographers</b>	Specialize in creating images, known as sonograms or ultrasounds, that depict the body's organs and tissues.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$77,740	15% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Hand-eye coordination Physical stamina Technical skills
<b>Epidemiologists</b>	Public health workers who investigate patterns and causes of disease and injury.	Master's	None	\$78,830	26% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Detail-oriented Leadership skills Math and statistical skills
<b>MRI Technologists</b>	Operate magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners to create diagnostic images.	Associate's	Licensure required in a few states	\$77,360	7% increase	Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Math skills Physical stamina Technical skills
<b>Nuclear Medicine Technologists</b>	Prepare radioactive drugs and administer them to patients for imaging or treatment.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$78,760	2% increase	Ability to use technology Analytical skills Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Physical stamina
<b>Radiologic Technologists</b>	Perform x-rays and other diagnostic imaging examinations on patients.	Associate's	Licensure or certification required in most states	\$61,370	6% increase	Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Math skills Physical stamina Technical skills

TABLE A3: HEALTH INFORMATICS OCCUPATIONS

Table A3: Health Informatics Occupations						
Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars</b>	Advise organizations on computerized healthcare systems and analyze clinical data.	Associate's	None; certification may be preferred by employers	\$55,600	17% increase	Analytical skills Detail-oriented Integrity Interpersonal skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Medical Records Specialists</b>	Compile, process, and maintain patient files.	Postsecondary nondegree award	None; certification may be preferred by employers	\$46,660	7% increase	Analytical skills Detail-oriented Integrity Interpersonal skills
<b>Medical Transcriptionists</b>	Use electronic devices to convert voice recordings from physicians and other healthcare workers into formal reports.	Postsecondary nondegree award	None; certification available	\$30,100	7% increase	Computer skills Critical-thinking skills Listening skills Time-management Writing skills

TABLE A4: SUPPORT SERVICES OCCUPATIONS

Table A4: Support Services Occupations						
Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Medical and Health Services Managers and Administrators</b>	Plan, direct, and coordinate medical and health services. They may manage an entire facility, a specific clinical area or department, or a medical practice for a group of physicians.	Bachelor's	Varies by state	\$101,340	28% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Leadership skills Technical skills
<b>Orderlies</b>	Transport patients and clean treatment areas.	High school diploma or equivalent	None	\$29,990	5% increase	Communication skills Compassion Patience Physical stamina
<b>Pharmacy Technicians</b>	Help pharmacists dispense prescription medication to customers or health professionals.	High school diploma or equivalent	Varies by state	\$36,740	5% increase	Customer-service skills Detail-oriented Listening skills Math skills Organizational skills
<b>Phlebotomists</b>	Draw blood for purposes such as tests, research, or donations.	Postsecondary nondegree award	Varies by state	\$37,380	10% increase	Communication skills Compassion Detail-oriented Dexterity Interpersonal skills Physical stamina

TABLE A5: THERAPEUTIC SERVICES OCCUPATIONS

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Table A5: Therapeutic Services Occupations

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Athletic Trainers</b>	Specialize in preventing, diagnosing, and treating muscle and bone injuries and illnesses. Not to be confused with fitness trainers and instructors.	Master's	Licensure or certification required in most states	\$48,420	17% increase	Compassion Decision-making skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills
<b>Audiologists</b>	Diagnose, manage, and treat patients who have hearing, balance, or related problems.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$78,950	10% increase	Communication skills Compassion Critical-thinking skills Interpersonal skills Patience Problem-solving skills
<b>Behavior Analysts*</b>	Observe and analyze the behavior of individuals in order to develop treatment plans that improve skill repertoires, safety, and quality of life. Includes Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs) and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs).	Bachelor's (BCaBA); Master's (BCBA)	Certification required in all states; Licensure required in some states	\$50,000 (BcaBA), \$90,130 (BCBA)	10% increase	Active listening Complex problem solving Critical thinking Instructing Reading comprehension Social perspectives
<b>Chiropractors</b>	Evaluate and treat patients' neuromusculoskeletal system using spinal adjustments and manipulation, as well as other clinical interventions.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$75,000	10% increase	Communication skills Decision-making skills Detail-oriented Dexterity Empathy Interpersonal skills
<b>Dental Assistants</b>	Provide patient care, take x-rays, keep records, and schedule appointments.	Postsecondary nondegree award	Varies by state	\$38,660	8% increase	Detail-oriented Dexterity Interpersonal skills Listening skills Organizational skills
<b>Dentists</b>	Diagnose and treat problems with patients' teeth, gums, and related parts of the mouth.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$163,220	6% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Dexterity Leadership skills Organizational skills Patience Problem-solving skills

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Dietitians and Nutritionists</b>	Plan and conduct food service or nutritional programs to help people lead healthy lives.	Bachelor's	Varies by state	\$61,650	7% increase	Analytical skills Compassion Listening skills Organizational skills Problem-solving skills Speaking skills
<b>Exercise Physiologists</b>	Develop fitness and exercise programs that help patients recover from chronic diseases and improve cardiovascular function, body composition, and flexibility. Not to be confused with fitness trainers and instructors or athletic trainers.	Bachelor's	Licensure required in Louisiana	\$47,940	9% increase	Compassion Decision-making skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills
<b>Genetic Counselors</b>	Assess individual or family risk for a variety of inherited conditions, such as genetic disorders and birth defects.	Master's	Licensure required in most states	\$80,150	18% increase	Communication skills Compassion Critical-thinking skills Interpersonal skills Organizational skills
<b>Home Health and Personal Care Aides</b>	Monitor the condition of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and help them with daily living activities.	High school diploma or equivalent	Varies by state	\$29,430	25% increase	Detail oriented Emotional skills Integrity Interpersonal skills Physical stamina
<b>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</b>	Work under the direction of registered nurses and doctors to provide basic medical care.	Postsecondary nondegree award	Licensure required in all states	\$48,070	6% increase	Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Patience Physical stamina Speaking skills
<b>Medical Assistants</b>	Complete administrative and clinical tasks in the offices of physicians, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities. Not to be confused with physician assistants.	Postsecondary nondegree award	None; certification may be preferred by employers	\$37,190	16% increase	Analytical skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Technical skills

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Nurse Anesthetists†</b>	Administer anesthesia and provide care before, during, and after surgical, therapeutic, diagnostic, and obstetrical procedures.	Master's	Varies by state	\$123,780	12% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Leadership skills Resourcefulness
<b>Nurse Midwivest</b>	Provide care to women, including gynecological exams, family planning services, and prenatal care.	Master's	Varies by state	\$123,780	7% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Leadership skills Resourcefulness
<b>Nurse Practitionerst</b>	Serve as primary and specialty care providers, delivering advanced nursing services to patients and their families.	Master's	Varies by state	\$123,780	46% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Leadership skills Resourcefulness
<b>Nursing Assistants</b>	Provide basic care and help patients with activities of daily living.	State-approved education program	Varies by state	\$30,310	5% increase	Communication skills Compassion Patience Physical stamina
<b>Occupational Therapists</b>	Treat injured, ill, or disabled patients through the therapeutic use of everyday activities.	Master's	Licensure required in all states	\$85,570	14% increase	Adaptability Communication skills Compassion Interpersonal skills Patience

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Occupational Therapy Aides</b>	Perform support activities to help patients develop, recover, and improve.	High school diploma or equivalent	None	\$33,560	14% increase	Adaptability Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Physical strength
<b>Occupational Therapy Assistants</b>	Provide therapy to help patients develop, recover, and improve.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$61,730	25% increase	Adaptability Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Physical strength
<b>Opticians</b>	Help fit eyeglasses and contact lenses and help customers decide which eyeglass frames or contact lenses to buy.	High school diploma or equivalent	Licensure required in most states	\$37,570	4% increase	Business skills Communication skills Customer-service skills Decision-making skills Dexterity
<b>Optometrists</b>	Examine the eyes and other parts of the visual system.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$124,300	10% increase	Decision-making skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Speaking skills
<b>Orthotists and Prosthetists</b>	Design and fabricate medical supportive devices, such as artificial limbs, and measure and fit patients for them.	Master's	Varies by state	\$75,440	17% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Patience Physical dexterity Physical stamina Problem-solving skills
<b>Pharmacists</b>	Dispense prescription medications to patients and offer expertise in the safe use of prescriptions.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$128,570	2% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Computer skills Detail-oriented Managerial skills
<b>Physical Therapists</b>	Help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$95,620	17% increase	Communication skills Compassion Detail-oriented Dexterity Physical stamina Resourcefulness Time-management skills

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Physicians Assistants</b>	Examine, diagnose, and treat patients under the supervision of a physician.	Master's	Licensure required in all states	\$121,530	28% increase	Communication skills Compassion Detail-oriented Emotional stability Interpersonal skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Physicians and Surgeons</b>	Diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses and address health maintenance.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	≥\$208,000‡	3% increase‡	Communication skills Compassion Detail-oriented Dexterity Leadership skills Organizational skills Patience Physical stamina Problem-solving skills
<b>Podiatrists</b>	Diagnose illnesses, treat injuries, and perform surgery for people with foot, ankle, and lower leg problems.	Doctorate or professional degree	Licensure required in all states	\$145,840	2% increase	Communication skills Compassion Critical-thinking skills Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills
<b>Psychiatric Aides</b>	Help patients who have a mental illness or developmental disabilities in their daily activities and ensure a safe and clean environment.	High school diploma or equivalent	None	\$30,260	5% increase	Compassion Interpersonal skills Observational skills Patience Physical stamina
<b>Psychiatric Technicians</b>	Provide therapeutic care and monitor the conditions of patients with mental illness or developmental disabilities.	Postsecondary nondegree award	Licensure required in some states	\$36,570	11% increase	Compassion Interpersonal skills Observational skills Patience Physical stamina
<b>Psychiatrists</b>	Diagnose, treat, and help prevent mental disorders.	Post-doctoral training or doctorate	Licensure and certification	\$226,880	10%	Critical thinking Detail-oriented Integrity Interpersonal communication Listening skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Radiation Therapists</b>	Administer doses of radiation to patients who have cancer or other serious diseases.	Associate's	Varies by state	\$82,790	6% increase	Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Technical skills

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Recreational Therapists</b>	Plan, direct, and coordinate recreation-based medical treatment programs to help maintain or improve patients' physical, social, and emotional well-being.	Bachelor's	Licensure or certification required in some states	\$47,940	4% increase	Communication skills Compassion Leadership skills Listening skills Patience Resourcefulness
<b>Registered Nurses</b>	Provide and coordinate patient care, educate patients and the public about various health conditions, and provide advice and emotional support to patients and their families.	Bachelor's	Licensure required in all states	\$77,600	6% increase	Critical-thinking skills Communication skills Compassion Detail-oriented Emotional stability Organizational skills Physical stamina
<b>Respiratory Therapists</b>	Care for patients who have conditions that cause them to have trouble breathing.	Associate's	Licensure required in all states except Alaska	\$61,830	14% increase	Compassion Detail-oriented Interpersonal skills Patience Problem-solving skills
<b>Speech-Language Pathologists</b>	Assess and treat people who have speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders.	Master's	Licensure required in all states	\$79,060	21% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Compassion Critical-thinking skills Detail-oriented Listening skills
<b>Surgical Assistants</b>	Help surgeons with tasks such as making incisions, placing clamps, and closing surgical sites.	Associate's or postsecondary nondegree award	None; certification may be preferred by employers	\$48,320	6% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Dexterity Integrity Listening skills Physical stamina Stress-management skills
<b>Surgical Technologists</b>	Prepare operating rooms, arrange equipment, and help doctors and first assistants during surgeries.	Associate's or postsecondary nondegree award	None; certification may be preferred by employers	\$48,530	6% increase	Communication skills Detail-oriented Dexterity Integrity Listening skills Physical stamina Stress-management skills

\*Information on Behavior Analysts contributed by Sarah Kent.

†Nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners are also known as advanced practice registered nurses

(APRNs).

‡The median wage and employment outlook for physicians and surgeons vary by specialty. See the [Occupational Handbook](#) for more information.

TABLE A6: OTHER HEALTH-RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Note that additional health-related career paths exist, such as those in public health and social services. See the table below for a selection of occupations.

Table A6: Other Health-Related Occupations

Occupation	Description	Entry-Level Education	Credentialing Requirements	Median Wage	Job Outlook (2021-31)	Skills
<b>Community Health Workers</b>	Act as intermediaries between residents and healthcare and social services providers.	High school diploma	None	\$46,590	16% increase	Communication skills Instructional skills Interpersonal skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Emergency Management Directors</b>	Prepare plans and procedures for responding to natural disasters and other emergencies.	Bachelor's	Varies by state	\$76,730	3% increase	Communication skills Critical-thinking skills Decision-making skills Interpersonal skills Leadership skills
<b>Health Education Specialists</b>	Teach people about behaviors that promote wellness.	Bachelor's	Certification may be preferred by employers	\$60,600	8% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Instructional skills Interpersonal skills Problem-solving skills
<b>Psychologists</b>	Study cognitive, emotional, and social processes and behavior by observing, interpreting, and recording how people relate to one another and to their environments.	Doctorate	Licensure required in most states	\$81,040	6% increase	Analytical skills Communication skills Integrity Interpersonal skills Observational skills Patience Problem-solving skills
<b>Social Workers</b>	Help individuals, groups, and families prevent and cope with problems in their everyday lives.	Bachelor's or master's	Licensure	\$50,390	9% increase	Communication skills Compassion Interpersonal skills Organizational skills Problem-solving skills

## Appendix B: Image Credits

### CHAPTER 1

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## Appendix C: Offline Copies of Test Yourself Quizzes

### CHAPTER 1 TEST YOURSELF

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Choose the correct answer.

1. \_\_\_ is the facts, examples, or sources used to support a claim. (Evidence/Facts)
2. \_\_\_ are words that hold the essence, or the key idea, of what you are trying to find. (Keywords/Wildcards)
3. \_\_\_ a word allows you to search for multiple variations of a word at once. (Abbreviating/Truncating)
4. A \_\_\_ is a word or phrase that is assigned to an article or other resource and describes the topic of the resource. (boolean operator/subject heading)
5. An \_\_\_ provides a big-picture overview of what the article is about and synthesizes the most important information. (abstract/introduction)

[Answers](#)

### CHAPTER 2 TEST YOURSELF

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1. \_\_\_ organizes the relationships between words in a sentence, especially between the doer and action, so that the reader can understand in detail who's doing what. (Paraphrasing/Grammar)
2. A \_\_\_ is incomplete usually because either the main-clause subject or predicate (or both) is missing. (sentence fragment/run-on sentence)
3. \_\_\_ is the general character or attitude of a work, and it is highly dependent on word choice and structure. (Tone/Point of view)
4. \_\_\_ is the practice of giving credit to the sources that inform your work. (Quoting/Citing)
5. \_\_\_ is the unauthorized or uncredited use of the writings or ideas of another in your writing. (Plagiarism/Collusion)

[Answers](#)

### CHAPTER 3 TEST YOURSELF

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1. A \_\_\_ is the capability to use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform "critical work functions." (proficiency/competency)

2. A \_\_\_ is a credential awarded by a governmental licensing agency that gives legal authority to work in an occupation. (license/certification)
3. To understand what type of work suits and to be able to convey that to others to get hired, you must become an expert in knowing \_\_\_\_. (employment trends/who you are)
4. A \_\_\_ is a credential awarded by a professional organization or other nongovernmental body that demonstrates competency. (certification/license)

### [Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 4 TEST YOURSELF

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1. Hard skills can be defined as skills that are: (easily quantifiable and objective abilities that you have learned and perhaps have mastered/more general and pertain to the way you relate to people, the way you think, or the ways in which you behave).
2. A \_\_\_ is a person who can vouch for your skills, knowledge, and experience as they relate to the jobs you apply for. (referral/reference)
3. \_\_\_ refers to building and maintaining relationships so that you can connect to career opportunities. (Networking/Marketing)
4. A strong resume describes your \_\_\_\_. (accomplishments/job duties)
5. An effective job search strategy includes submitting a \_\_\_ cover letter with each application. (generic/customized)

### [Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 5 TEST YOURSELF

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1. An \_\_\_ refers to a tool or approach for practically addressing ethical challenges that often includes a stepwise procedure. (ethical framework/ethical theory)
2. An ethical theory that focuses on action or, more properly, the rules governing action, is \_\_\_\_. (utilitarianism/deontology)
3. \_\_\_ refers to a society's shared, stable beliefs about what is good and bad, right and wrong. (Principles/Morality)
4. The \_\_\_, written in 1947, is a set of 10 ethical principles for human research. (Nuremberg Code/Declaration of Helsinki)
5. \_\_\_ means obtaining and documenting people's agreement to have a medical procedure or participate in a study, having informed them of everything that might reasonably be expected to affect their decision. (Autonomy/Informed consent)

### [Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 6 TEST YOURSELF

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1. \_\_\_ means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. (Style/Professionalism)
2. \_\_\_ can be defined as interrelated knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow teams to work together to accomplish interdependent goals. (Interprofessional collaborative practice/Teamwork processes)
3. \_\_\_ refers to the structured process by which information is clearly and accurately exchanged among team members. (Communication/Leadership)
4. A \_\_\_ is a brief meeting before and/or during a shift to establish situational awareness, reinforce plans already in place, and adjust the teamwork plan as needed. (debrief/huddle)
5. \_\_\_ is the ability to anticipate and support team members' needs through accurate knowledge about their responsibilities and workload. (Mutual support/Situation monitoring)

[Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 7 TEST YOURSELF

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1. \_\_\_ involves professionals undertaking interdependent roles working together, investing in shared strategies, problem-solving, and decision-making to design care plans supporting patient outcomes. (Communication/Collaboration)
2. \_\_\_ is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others. (Personal health literacy/Organizational health literacy)
3. Examples of \_\_\_ include facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, and body language. (non-verbal communication strategies/therapeutic communication)
4. \_\_\_ is helpful when therapeutically communicating with others. (Sympathy/Empathy)
5. All aspects of communication are influenced by \_\_\_. (culture/netiquette)

[Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 8 TEST YOURSELF

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1. \_\_\_ is being in good physical and mental health. (Wellness/Fitness)
2. \_\_\_ is a feeling a person gets when faced with a challenge. (Worry/Stress)
3. \_\_\_ is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. (Time management/Procrastination)
4. \_\_\_ are tricks for memorizing lists and data. (Study hacks/Mnemonics)
5. An important component of personal wellness is \_\_\_ health. (financial/emotional)

[Answers](#)

## CHAPTER 1 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. Evidence
2. Keywords
3. Truncating
4. subject heading
5. abstract

## CHAPTER 2 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. Grammar
2. sentence fragment
3. Tone
4. Citing
5. Plagiarism

## CHAPTER 3 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. competency
2. license
3. who you are
4. certification

## CHAPTER 4 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. easily quantifiable and objective abilities that you have learned and perhaps have mastered
2. reference
3. Networking
4. accomplishments
5. customized

## CHAPTER 5 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. ethical framework
2. deontology
3. Morality
4. Nuremberg Code
5. Informed consent

## CHAPTER 6 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. Professionalism
2. Teamwork processes
3. Communication
4. huddle
5. Mutual support

## CHAPTER 7 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. Collaboration
2. Personal health literacy
3. non-verbal communication strategies
4. Empathy
5. culture

## CHAPTER 8 TEST YOURSELF ANSWERS

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1. Wellness
2. Stress
3. Procrastination
4. Mnemonics
5. emotional